THIS SECTION WAS DISTRIBUTED FREE OF CHARGE BY THE POST-DISPATCH THROUGHOUT SOUTHERN ILLINOIS.

A SPECIAL SECTION OF THE

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

DEVOTED TO

THE CENTRALIA MINE DISASTER

APRIL 30, 1947

ILLINOIS MINE OPERATORS 'SHAKEN DOWN' BY G. O. P. FOR CHICAGO ELECTION FUND

Inspectors Who Wield Power Over Operations in Coal Fields Suggest Gifts and Hint as to Size of Donation Expected—Democrats as Well as Republicans Solicited.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 19.

By HARRY WILENSKY
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., March 19—A virtual "shakedown" of Illinois coal mine operators has been conducted by the State Department of Mines and Minerals to raise funds for the Republican mayoral campaign in Chicago, the Post-Dispatch has learned.

In theory, all campaign contributions from the mine operators were voluntary. But the donations were "suggested" by State mine inspectors who have the power to make life miserable for an owner, and even to close a mine if its operating methods are deemed hazardous.

Russell W. Root, Republican nominee, opposes Martin H. Kennelly, Democrat, in the Chicago mayor's race, to be decided April 1. The contest, which pits the state organization of Republican Gov. Dwight H. Green against the Cook county Democratic organization of Mayor Edward J. Kelly, has national implications, and may have a direct bearing on Green's status as possible vice presidential candidate on the G. O. P. ticket in 1948.

Size of "Gifts" Suggested.

The mine inspectors, who dropped in for a special visit, not only thought a donation to the G.O.P. cause would be nice, but suggested how much the contribution should be. Small mines were let off with a contribution of $100, but some big companies accepted the hint that they should come across with $1000 in order that no one might get the notion they were in the piker class.

If an operator balked, the inspector explained that Robert M. Medill, director of the Department of Mines, had instructed him to ask "all friends satisfied with the inspection service" to make a voluntary contribution.

The solicitation avoided partisanship, giving Democrats and Republicans equal opportunity to show how satisfied they were with the inspection service. Most of the operators approached by the inspectors found it expedient to contribute. Some, however, refused, and several complained to Medill or to Gov. Green.

St. Louisan Objects.

One of those who balked was a St. Louisan, Louis F. Lumaghi Jr., who operates a mine near Collinsville. He not only declined to donate, but on March 15 wrote Medill the following protest:

"Today Mr. R. R. Schiber, the state mine inspector for our district, called on us and said he had been instructed by you to solicit a contribution to the Republican campaign fund for the Chicago mayoralty election. He said that the smaller mines had been asked to give $100 and suggested that an appropriate amount for us would be $500.

"The state mine inspectors in Illinois are entrusted with the duty of enforcing the mining laws to protect the lives of the men who work in the mines. They have wide powers in keeping with these responsibilities, even to the power of closing a mine if in their opinion it is not being safely operated. Under these circumstances we do not consider it proper for them to solicit contributions from companies whose mines they inspect and we will not make any such contribution.

"Mr. Schiber is an able and conscientious inspector. We trust that in the future when he visits us his only orders will be to protect the safety of the 300 men who work in and around our mine."

Allocation of State Orders.

As head of the Department of Mines, Medill controls allocation of State coal orders amounting to 500,000 tons a year among the mines. Interviewed by a Post-Dispatch reporter, he conceded there had been complaints from operators, but insisted that inspectors had been instructed merely to accept voluntary contributions and there was no question of reprisals against those who refused to donate.

"A number of my men voluntarily sent in contributions," he said. "I told them, if they found anybody who wanted to kick in, good. You know, many miners in Southern Illinois have relatives in Chicago and are interested in the campaign there. But I've never authorized any solicitation."

Medill said he had summoned all 16 of his inspectors to a conference in Springfield on March 7 after Gov. Green's office twice had reported receipt of complaints about solicitation of contributions. "I told my men if they were doing that to stop it," he declared.

When the reporter pointed out that the solicitation to which Lumaghi objected had occurred on March 15, eight days after the inspectors received their purported instructions to "stop it," Medill's only comment was, "I'm surprised at Lumaghi's complaint."

Schiber, the inspector who called on Lumaghi, told the reporter, "I don't solicit any contributions. I just mention it to 'em. And I don't set any amount."

Asked if he had suggested that Lumaghi donate $500, he replied, "I didn't exactly suggest $500. I said some give according to tonnage (of daily production), and a mine of certain tonnage might give $500, that's all."

Referring to instructions received at the conference of inspectors in Springfield, Schiber declared: "Medill said he'd heard of some complaints. He told us don't solicit, just mention it." Asked if Democrats had contributed to the Republican campaign, Schiber replied, "I never inquire about affiliation."

The inspector said he had received no large donations, most of the contributions approximating $100. "I don't solicit on inspection time," he added. "On days I don't inspect, then I might drop in."

The Dead at Centralia

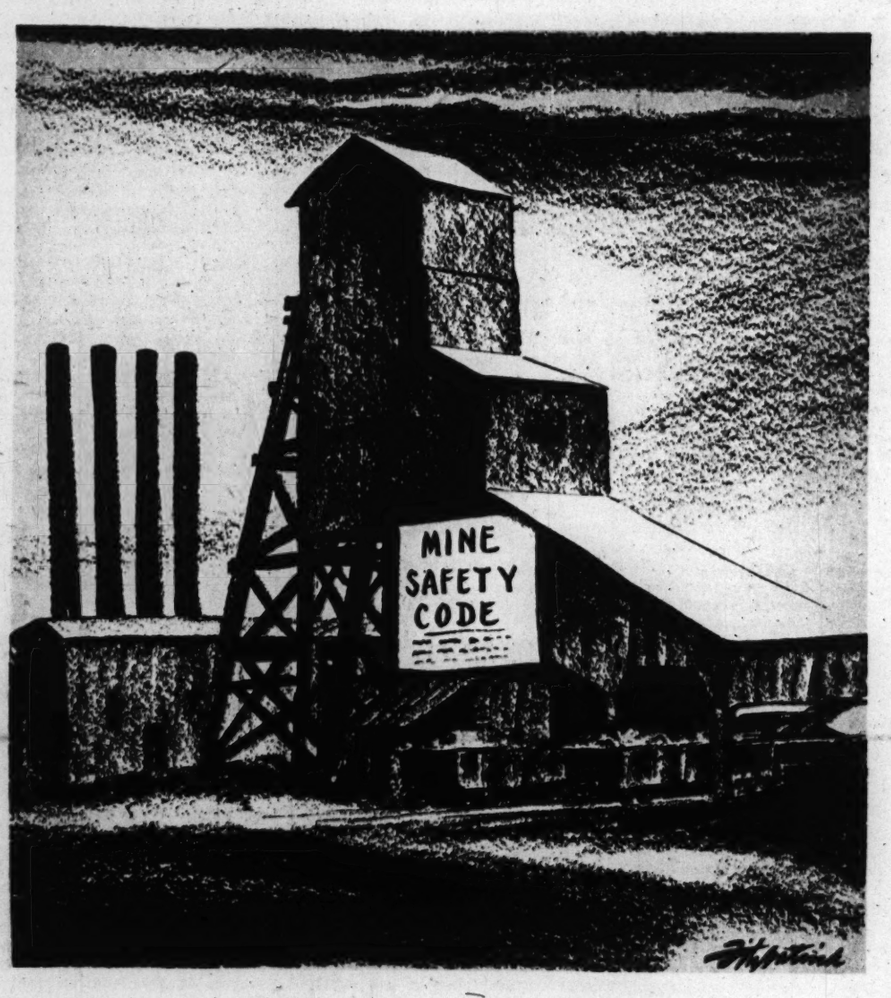
Name and Age.	Number of Dependents
Joe Altadonna, 60	1
Rodrigo Alvarez, 50	1
Joe Ballantini, 58	1
Pietro Ballantini, 60	1
Alvin M. Barnes, 46	2
Martin Basola, 50	1
Nick Basola, 43	6
Dominick Beneventi, 64	1
Harry A. Berger, 54	1
Celso Biagi, 62	0
Harold J. Bryant, 24	1
Joe Bryant, 48	7
Edward Bude, 54	1
Otto Buehne, 62	1
Raymond C. Buehne, 30	4
Thomas M. Bush, 63	1
John Busse, 59	1
Charlie Cagle, 54	5
Theodore V. Carriaux, 52	1
Arthur H. Carter, 54	1
Joseph Cerutti, 36	0
Dominick Cervi, 53	3
Anton Chiarottino, 65	1
Paul Comper, 53	1
Clifford Copple, 42	1
Frank Copple, 38	0
Leo R. Dehn, 53	2
Eugene Erwin, 45	3
George Evans, 43	2
Frank Famera, 50	1
Andrew Farley, 58	1
Walter Fatgatter, 55	1
John Figielek, 48	1
William F. Fortmeyer, 25	2
Ray Fouts, 47	3
Odia Lee Francis, 70	1
Luther Frazier, 41	3
Martin F. Freeman Jr., 20	2
Martin F. Freeman Sr., 39	4
Albert J. Friend, 36	3
Bruno Gaertner, 47	1
Angelo Gallassini, 61	1
Tony Giovanini, 65	1
John O. Grotti, 32	2
Louis Grotti, 45	0
Adolph H. Gutzler, 48	1
Fred W. Gutzler, 57	1
John H. Gutzler, 63	1
John W. Gutzler, 54	1
Henry Hoeinghaus, 56	2
Ed Hofstetter, 68	1
Gustave Hohman, 54	1
Ned Jackson, 34	2
Warrie L. Jackson, 55	1
Henry Knicker, 59	3
Philip Knight, 46	2
Joseph Koch Sr., 65	5
Charles Kraus, 52	0
Fred Laughhunn, 49	4
Domenico Lenzini, 59	1
Pete Lenzini, 62	1
Miles McCollum, 65	1
Charles McGreavey, 57	1
Clarence McHenry, 50	1
John Mazeka, 46	0
William Mentler, 61	0
Fred Moore, 49	4
Elmer G. Moss, 33	5
Henry W. Niepoetter, 42	2
Charles Oestreich, 61	2
George Panceroff, 24	2
Frank Paulauskis, 62	0
John T. Pawliss, 22	0
Charles L. Peart, 60	1
Joseph H. Peller, 46	3
Walter Pelker, 31	2
Alva F. Petrea, 56	1
Peter Piasse, 46	1
Julius Piazzi, 27	0
Louis Piazzi, 63	1
John Pick Sr., 56	1
John Placek, 45	4
Alfredo Pollacci, 69	1
George Powell, 40	1
Richard Privette, 39	3
Glenn Purcell, 34	1
Nick Reggo, 57	1
Jacob W. Rethard, 60	1
Forest Rhodes, 45	6
Carl Rohde, 46	1
Daniel C. Sanders, 66	1
Jacob Schmidt, 56	1
Archie Schofield, 50	1
Lee G. Shaw, 44	2
Anton Skrobul, 63	1
Clarence Smith, 54	1
Ray O. Smith, 56	2
Andrew Spinner, 51	0
Joseph Spinner, 57	1
Alfred Stevens, 53	1
H. W. Sundermeyer, 47	1
James Tabor, 42	2
Stanley W. Teckus, 54	2
Anthony Tickus, 24	1
Anton Tillman, 67	2
Emmett Uhls, 49	1
Dude Vancil, 46	0
Joe Vancil, 50	1
Mark L. Watson, 71	4
Joe Zinkus, 54	1
Max Zonarini, 65	0

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO MAKE MINES SAFE

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch calls for

1. Taking inspectors out of politics.
2. Outlawing political contributions by Illinois coal companies and all other corporations.
3. Making failure to comply with State safety laws a felony.
4. Bringing the guilty to justice.

A COMPLETE presentation of St. Louis Post-Dispatch reports on Centralia mine disaster, on those responsible for it, and on how to prevent such disasters in the future.



TIME TO GET IT DOWN BELOW

Reprinted From the Post-Dispatch of April 3

The Crime at Centralia

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 2

Today the nation's 400,000 United Mine Workers are half way through the Holy Week of mourning called by John L. Lewis to focus attention on the wanton loss of 111 lives at the Centralia Coal Co. Mine No. 5.

What conclusions are to be drawn from the disaster?

What can and should be done?

What basic facts confront the federal, state and county agencies as they start their investigations?

1. The Centralia Coal Co. This interlocking associate of the $1,000,000 Bell & Zoller Coal and Mining Co. of Chicago made a practice of violating Illinois's model mine safety law. The repeated warnings of State Mine Inspector Driscoll Scanlan were ignored, as were federal complaints of safety code violations.

Continuous disregard of notices posted over many months makes it plain that the mine management, headed by William P. Young, deliberately gambled with the lives of their employes.

2. State Department of Mines. Although charged by law with enforcing the state mine safety law, Robert M. Medill, who resigned yesterday as State Director of Mines, refused to back up his inspector. When the inspector predicted a dust explosion, Medill said: "We'll just have to take that chance." He shrugged off other warnings.

Moreover, he personally led his inspection staff in a political shakedown of coal operators to raise a "department quota" of $25,000. When Inspector Scanlan rebelled at political undercutting of mine safety work, Medill told him he was "just too damned honest."

3. Gov. Dwight H. Green. One year and 22 days before the explosion, members of UMWA Local No. 52 wrote to Gov. Green personally because they could get no protection from Director Medill or his department. They begged their Governor to "please save our lives."

Questioned after the disaster, Gov. Green said: "There is no further record in my office." When he spoke, three of the four committee signers were dead. They had told their Governor what would happen and he was so unmoved that he might better have been a timber prop in the mine

4. Role of the Federal Government. When the Federal Government took over the coal mines to assure continued production, it assumed not only control but responsibility for safety as well. Safety was promoted through announcement last July of a Federal Safety and Practice Code, under which the Coal Mines Administrator has authority to discipline or replace an operating manager of a mine who fails to correct safety breaches. This is a clear obligation.

The federal inspection staff is small and its work is actually in process of development. Federal facilities do not yet compare with those of a mining state like Illinois.

5. State vs. Federal Guilt. With negligence in so many quarters, the danger is that the faithless state officials will seek to escape through political pressure. What will be attempted in the way of buck passing was suggested the day after the disaster when Senator Brooks arose in Washington to demand a one-sided investigation. His purpose was to protect the 1948 political fortunes of Dwight Green, which Robert R. McCormick, Illinois Republican boss, has been trying to build up in the Chicago Tribune.

The whitewash was too thin. What a spectacle it is to see professional state rights clamorers trying to fix responsibility on Washington!

6. Local Investigation and Prosecution. The record shows that the widows and orphans cannot count on the Governor and his now resigned Director of Mines to make the guilty pay. As for local prosecution, it is complicated by the fact that most of the victims lived in Marion County whereas they lost their lives within Washington County.

Thus, the responsibility to assist a grand jury in marshalling evidence and bringing indictments rests on State's Attorney Wilbert J. Hohlt of Nashville. It is for this reason that Mr. Hohlt should not serve on the state investigating commission but should jealously guard his independence.

Out of these facts, the following conclusions take form:

1. Indictments should be brought against all, no matter how high the office or station, who can be shown to have gambled with human life.

2. A state corrupt practices act should be passed to outlaw further undermining of safety by political shakedowns.

3. The State Mine Department should be taken out of patronage politics and put under strict civil service.

4. Federal inspection should prepare to enforce safety in mines wherever state protection breaks down.

5. The responsible prosecuting officer should scrupulously protect himself from all outside involvements.

HOW 111 MEN DIED IN ILLINOIS PIT; REPEATED WARNINGS BY INSPECTOR ON HAZARDS

Blast Fed by Excessive Coal Dust Raced Through Tunnels—Fellow Workmen Driven Back by Poisonous Fumes After Futile Efforts to Reach Victims.

By HARRY WILENSKY
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff.

THE clock in the office of the Centralia Coal Co.'s Mine No. 5 ticked toward quitting time on the afternoon of March 25. As the hands registered 3:27 and the 142 men working 540 feet underground prepared to leave the pit at the end of their shift, an explosion occurred.

The blast originated in one of the work rooms in the northwestern section of the workings. Fed by coal dust, it whooshed through the labyrinth of tunnels underlying the town of Wamac, Ill., on the southern outskirts of Centralia. Thirty-one men, most of whom happened to be near the shaft at the time, made their way to the cage and were brought out alive, but the remaining 111 were trapped. Fellow workmen who tried to reach them shortly after the explosion were driven back by poisonous fumes.

As rescue crews with special equipment hurried from Belleville, West Frankfort, Herrin, DuQuoin, Eldorado and other Illinois mine towns, relatives of the trapped miners gathered in tense, silent groups around the tipple. It was a raw day, and an icy wind whipped the coal dust through the air, begriming faces and clothing; but the wives, sons and daughters stayed on, hour after hour.

Here and there a woman wiped tears from her eyes, but few broke down. After darkness fell, many of the relatives retired to a washhouse where they sat on the benches the miners had used in changing their clothes. Overhead, suspended on chains and pulleys, hung the street clothing of the men who had failed to come up. In some cases wives recognized their husbands' garments and selected their places for the long vigil.

It rained. Then it snowed. Still most of the wan, tight-lipped relatives stayed on, refusing to go home "until we can find out." The Red Cross and the Salvation Army set up canteens which served coffee and sandwiches.

27 Hours Before Rescue Workers Bring First of Bodies to Surface.

It was 27 hours before the rescue crews brought the first trapped miner to the surface. An eerie hush fell over the crowd, held back by police, as the first stretcher was carried from the cage to the line of waiting ambulances. When it was observed that the blanket in which the huddled form was wrapped covered the face, some women turned their heads and wept. Sixteen other victims followed out of the shaft, but all were dead.

The next day, after 18 additional bodies were brought out, those in charge began to refer to their work as "recovery operations" instead of rescue activities, and hopes for the men still unaccounted for faded.

Penetration of the underground passageways was a laborious as well as extremely hazardous operation involving removal of debris, sealing off of side tunnels and partial restoration of the mine's ventilating system.

On March 28, the rescue volunteers threatened to quit when Robert M. Medill, director of the Illinois Department of Mines and Minerals, sought to turn the electric power on in the blast-torn mine to "speed the work." Driscoll Scanlan, state mine inspector who had been overruled in repeated efforts to close the mine as unsafe months before the explosion occurred, upheld the workers' contention that this might result in a new explosion.

A chemical test of the air in the mine disclosed the presence of a mixture of gases that could be ignited by an electric spark, and Medill conceded he was wrong.

The day-and-night operations proceeded with mules instead of power-driven equipment, and on March 29 the farthest corner of the mine was penetrated, disclosing that all of the remaining miners were dead.

The victims left 99 widows and 76 children under the age of 18.

The toll of 111 dead made the Centralia explosion the nation's worst mine disaster in 23 years. Only once before had Illinois experienced a mining tragedy of such proportions; this was at Cherry in 1909, when 259 men were killed.

After an intensive study, a team of five experts from the United States Bureau of Mines reported the Centralia explosion "was caused by coal dust raised into the air and ignited by explosives fired in a dangerous and non-permissible manner."

The inspectors found explosives had been tamped with combustible coal dust, in violation of regulations. They pointed out the mine was not using electric detonators, as had been recommended. State and federal experts agreed the explosion was spread from the point of ignition to distant reaches of the mine by excessive quantities of coal dust blown into the air and ignited.

Both Scanlan and federal mine inspectors had notified the management prior to the disaster that accumulations of coal dust in the mine were excessive, and had recommended use of rock dust. When blown into the air by an explosion, rock dust lessens the combustibility of coal dust, thereby localizing and smothering the blast.

Inspector Made Repeated Complaints of Dust; Forced Clean-up Once.

In his inspection reports on Mine No. 5, Scanlan time and again had cited the danger of a dust explosion and had urged rock-dusting, thereby resisting pressure from higher-ups in the State Department of Mines who considered his concern for the miners' safety excessive. On one occasion the inspector had risked the loss of his job by forcing the Centralia mine partially to suspend production until it corrected the dust hazard.

Conditions in the mine remained safe for only a short time, however, Scanlan reported, and soon his official complaints and his recommendations for corrective steps were resumed.

At the conclusion of the recovery operations, which Scanlan had directed personally, going down into the mine with the volunteers, the weary inspector made this bitter comment:

"Every one of my recommendations could have been complied with, could have saved the company money, and could have saved these men's lives."

60 SUGGESTIONS BY U.S. INSPECTOR AT CENTRALIA PIT

Official Made Safety Recommendations Last November—Urged Better Air.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 27

By GEORGE H. HALL
A Washington Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

WASHINGTON, March 27—Sixty recommendations for further protection of life and property in the Centralia Coal Company's No. 5 mine were made by Frank Perz, a Government inspector, after an examination of the workings last November. This was learned today at the Bureau of Mines, a branch of the Department of the Interior.

Many of these recommendations were designed to correct conditions that constituted alleged violations of the Federal mine safety code. Whether the recommendations have been complied with will be learned from the report of an inspection made last Thursday This report should be available tomorrow.

Perz's main suggestions were that haulage and timbering conditions should be made safer and the ventilating and air-testing system improved.

Summary of Findings.

Following is a summary of the conditions as reported by Perz to the Bureau of Mines:

Dense clouds of coal dust were present near the open-type electric motors throughout the tipple. In dusty locations motors of dust-tight construction should be provided.

Excessive accumulations of coal dust were present throughout the tipple. The tipple should be kept free of accumulations.

There were no railings in the floor opening at the discharge end of the raw coal conveyer in the tipple. These should be supplied.

The timbering system adopted at this mine was not being carried out in a number of working places.

Timbers of sufficient length to use as cross-bars were not provided in the working sections.

Safety posts, jacks or cross bars were not being used at faces of numerous working places that required them.

Unsupported loose roof and overhanging ribs and brows were observed on practically all of the room entries and intermediate haulageways, and unsupported loose roof was observed along the roadways and a large number of working places. This should be timbered adequately or taken down.

One of the warning signs posted on the west wall of explosives storage magazine should be located so a bullet passing through the face of the sign will not strike the magazine.

Underground explosives storage boxes were stored in entry crosscuts and abandoned room necks about 10 feet from tracks and power wires. Boxes should be placed at least 25 feet from roadways or power wires.

Blasting Caps and Fuse.

Permissible explosives were fired with blasting caps and fuse. They should be fired with electric detonators or approved shot-firing units.

The mine was ventilated by one continuous air current and as a result some worked-out sections were not ventilated properly. The main intake air current should be divided into splits to ventilate all parts of the mine effectively, or worked-out sections should be sealed.

A total of 160 men were employed underground on one air split. The number of men working on one split should not exceed 100 to conform to requirements of Illinois law.

An air measurement of 4680 cubic feet a minute was obtained in one open crosscut, where there should have been 6000 cubic feet a minute.

Three of the air samples indicated that less than 19.5 per cent of oxygen was contained in them and two of the samples showed more than 0.5 per cent carbon dioxide. The air should be improved to contain at least 19.5 per cent of oxygen and not more than 0.5 per cent of carbon dioxide.

Faulty Crosscuts.

In many places room crosscuts were not made at proper intervals. Crosscuts should be made at not more than 60-foot intervals.

Stoppings between intake and return air along main haulage ways were of wood construction. On other than room entries, these should be of solid, non-combustible material, such as concrete.

All doors on the main haulage roads, except one, were erected singly so that when any were opened air was short-circuited away from the working section. Doors should be built in pairs.

One ventilation door was latched open, causing air to be short-circuited away from the working sections. Doors should be kept closed.

Abandoned workings were not posted to warn unauthorized persons against entering the territory.

Abandoned room panel entries in some areas were not sealed, allowing noxious gases from these abandoned entries to be carried to active working sections with the air current.

Due to the extensive territory the mine examiner for the day shift had to cover he had to start at 11 p.m. or eight hours before the start of the shift. Examination should start not more than four hours before the first shift enters the mine.

No Gas Tests During Shifts.

The mine examiners did not mark the date or their initials near the faces of all active rooms reportedly examined by them. The working places were not tested for gas during the working shift. At least once a shift a competent person should test for methane, noxious gases or oxygen deficiency.

There were excessive accumulations of coal dust in some haulage ways.

The mine was very dry and dusty, excessive dust being raised during some operations. A wetting agent was needed in many places.

Rock dust was applied to within about 400 feet of the faces of entries. Rooms were not rock-dusted. Rock dust should be applied within 80 feet of the faces.

Four dust samples indicate road samples weer lower in incombustible content than was recommended for this mine.

Sides of Cages Open.

The sides of the cages were open and the ends of the cages were not guarded when men were hoisted and lowered.

Four switch throws recently installed along a main haulage road were placed on the trolley-wire side instead of the clearance side.

Clearance along main and intermediate haulageways was obstructed with waste.

Locomotives mere not equipped with devices for derailing cars or with audible warning devices.

Back poling appears to be general practice. This should be prohibited except where the trolley cannot be reversed. Failure to place a stop block or derailing device across the track in one room caused the death of one man by a runaway car. Stops should be used where men are working.

Men in man-trips ride under the trolley wire. No person should ride under the trolley wire unless suitably covered man-cars are used.

Unguarded Trolley Wire.

The trolley wire was energized when men were loading and unloading from man-trips and the trolley wire was not guarded.

Bare power wires were touching timbers at numerous places. These wires should be supported by insulators.

Cutout switches were not provided at the beginning of most branch trolley or power lines.

Trolley and power wires sagged excessively and touched timbers in most of the working sections. These should be kept taut.

Trolley and power wires were not guarded anywhere in the mine.

Frames of mining machines and electric drills were not grounded.

Telephone service was not provided to two working sections. It should be to all.

Sufficient on-shift examinations were not made for gas.

Many of the trailing cables for portable underground electric equipment were not provided with overload protection at the nips.

The cutter chains of mining machines were not equipped with positive locking devices.

Exposed gears and sprockets in the tipple constituted a hazard.

Drive belts on pumps on one main pumping station were not guarded.

No Rock Dust at Mine Doors.

Rock dust was not provided at mine doors. It should be near each ventilation door.

From four to six barrels of lubricating oil and grease weer stored in abandoned room necks in each working section. About two weeks requirements. Storage should be in fireproof places if more than two days' supply is on hand.

Signs indicating the direction of escape ways were not posted.

All underground employes and officials, except the mine examiners, used open-flame carbide lamps for illumination. All workmen and other persons underground should use only permissible electric cap lamps.

Haulagemen and others working around moving equipment wore loose-fitting equipment, where it should fit snugly.

The mine examiner for the night shift was not certified. He should have been certified by the Illinois department of mines and minerals.

Men were observed lighting matches during inspection. Because of explosion and fire hazards carrying of matches or other flame-making devices underground should be prohibited.

Parz's report noted that since the last inspection (in September, 1942) 10 conditions which were criticized had been rectified.

Miners Asked State to Enforce Laws at Shaft, 'Save Our Lives'

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 27

One of Signers Dead, Two Missing and One Alive —Letter Told of Dust and Violations.

By a Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., March 27—Workers in the Centralia Coal Co. mine from which bodies are now being removed begged Gov. Dwight H. Green of Illinois more than a year ago to "please save our lives" by making the State Department of Mines and Minerals enforce safety regulations in the mine.

The miners told the Governor they feared a disastrous dust explosion, it was disclosed today by Local 52, United Mine Workers of America.

The miners pleaded for the Governor's help in a letter dated March 3, 1946. The four signers of the letter all were in the mine when the explosion occurred. William E. Rowekamp, recording secretary of the local, was brought out alive a few minutes after the blast. The second signer, Elmer Moss, was killed, his body having been brought out last night. The other two signers, Jake Schmidt, president, and Thomas Bush, are still unaccounted for.

Committee's Letter

The committee of four wrote:

"Dear Governor Green:

"We, the officers of Local Union No. 52, UMWA, have been instructed by the members to write a letter to you in protest against the negligence and unfair practices of your department of mines and minerals. But before we go any further we want you to know that this is not a protest against Mr. Driscoll Scanlan, the state mine inspector in this district.

"Mr. Scanlan is one of the best inspectors that ever came to our mine. He is honest, of good character and a good mining man. He writes his reports just as he finds the mine. But your mining board will not let him enforce the law or take the necessary action to protect our lives and health. This protest is against the men above Mr. Scanlan, in your Department of Mines and Minerals.

"In fact, Gov. Green, this is a plea to you to please save our lives, to please make the Department of Mines and Minerals enforce the laws at the No. 5 mine of the Centralia Coal Co. at Centralia, Ill., at which mine we are now employed, before we have a dust explosion at this mine just like happened in Kentucky and West Virginia.

"For the last couple of years the policy of the Department of Mines and Minerals toward us has been one of ignoring us. When we write complaints to Springfield it will sometimes be several weeks before we hear from them, and then sometimes we have to write the second letter to them before they will answer us.

"In December 1945 we preferred charges before the mining board against the mine manager and the superintendent of our mine and requested that their certificates be revoked for operating the mine in violation of the state mining laws and for ignoring the recommendations of the state mine inspector.

"A special investigating commission was sent to the mine. They were very unfair toward us. On the commission was Robert Wier, a boss for our coal company. The commission did not inspect all of the mine. They did not stay at the machine, that our main complaint was on, long enough to fairly see the actual conditions at this machine. They let the superintendent of the mine lead them around the mine. And they rode out of the mine in a mine car, so they could not see the dirty and dusty and unsafe conditions on the main haulage roads. And they ignored the officers of this local union. They did not talk to us or give us a chance to call their attention to unsafe conditions or listen to our complaints.

"If we understand the law right, the mining board should have held a hearing and we should have been allowed to come before the board and press our charges. After the Commission went through our mine we waited several weeks and did not hear from them and then we wrote the director a letter. He then wrote us that the Commission found insufficient evidence to revoke the certificates of the mine manager and the mine superintendent.

"Then a few days later a report of the Commission was posted at the mine, making eight recommendations. Any one of these recommendations should be sufficient to revoke the certificates of the manager and superintendent and to remove them from the mine.

"For your information as to the conditions at this mine, we are sending you copies of the state mine inspector's report, also a copy of the report of the Investigation Commission which you can check against the state inspector's report and see the unfairness of the Commission. Then please check these reports with the last federal inspection report of July 1945, which you can get from the director of your Department or from our district president, Hugh White. After reading these reports of the state and federal inspectors we kindly invite you to make a personal inspection of this mine yourself.

"We are writing you, Gov. Green, because we believe you want to give the people an honest administration and that you do not know how unfair your mining department is toward the men in this mine. Several years ago after a disaster at Gillespie we saw your pictures in the papers going down in the mine to make a personal investigation of the accident.

"We are giving you a chance to correct the conditions at this mine that may cause a much worse disaster than the one at Gillespie or the one in Kentucky.

"If your mining board does not enforce the laws at this mine and back the state mine inspector, then we are going to the state's attorney, the public and the newspapers.

"We will appreciate an early personal reply from you stating your position in regard to the above and the enforcement of the state mining law.

Very respectfully yours,
Jake Schmidt, President.
William E. Rowekamp, recording secretary.
Thomas Bush,
Elmer Moss,—Committee."

Rowekamp said Gov. Green had replied that he would "look into" the matter. Asked if any action was taken to force elimination of hazards at the mine, the union official said, "Scanlan's inspection reports answer that."

He was referring to reports in which Scanlan had repeatedly recommended correction of dust and other hazards in the mine. The mine company could have been required to follow the recommendations, but this was not done.

Hugh White, UMW district president, today declared the Centralia mine had been known as "one of the worst in the state," and added, "We've been getting more complaints from our members about this mine than any other."

In Chicago, W. P. Young, president of the Bell and Zoller Coal Co., parent organization to the Centralia Coal Co., and vice president of the Centralia firm, declared that "we have been on these recommendations," referring to the anti-dust measures urged by the mine inspector. Young said that "some can be accomplished in a few days, but others take several months, which accounts for their appearance in several reports."

104 MINERS STILL TRAPPED IN ILLINOIS; 30 RESCUED; REPEATED HAZARD WARNINGS

17 KNOWN DEAD, ONE BODY TAKEN FROM CENTRALIA PIT AFTER BLAST

Notices Had Been Posted of Excessive Dust — Barriers Against Gas Only Hope for Men Still Underground.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 26

By HARRY WILENSKY
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch

CENTRALIA, Ill., March 26—The Centralia Coal Co., operators of the mine in which 104 miners are trapped 540 feet below the surface near here today as a result of an explosion yesterday, had been warned repeatedly by the Illinois State Mine Inspector to improve conditions which constituted an "explosion hazard."

Warnings of the danger due to an excessive amount of dust in the mine were posted in inconspicuous corners of the mine washrooms. They were signed by Driscoll Scanlan, District 13, Illinois, mine inspector.

First of this long series of warnings was dated Dec . 13, 1945. The last of the notices had been posted only last week, March 18, and declared that "recommendations of previous inspections, not complied with, should be complied with."

When the explosion occurred in the mine yesterday, 151 men were underground. Poisonous gasses appeared to have filled much of the mine following the explosion.

Only 30 men had been rescued and 17 were known to be dead. One body was brought to the surface and rescue workers said others were lying in the subterranean passages.

Rescuers Near Trapped Men.

This afternoon it was announced that rescue crews were believed to be within 1000 feet of a group of trapped miners. Rescue squads, about 40 men in all, were working in four-hour shifts. They wore gas masks as they worked their way down the passages, some of which are nearly four miles long.

Mine officials said the only hope that any of the miners would be found alive lay in the possibility that they might be able to build barriers against the gas with timbers, slate and coal. This hope dimmed with every passing hour.

Relatives of the missing men waited in chilled groups around the mine entrance and in the washhouses, where the men's street clothes still hung on racks.

Twenty-four hours after the explosion many of the miners' wives still stood there, waiting. They spoke only in hoarse whispers. Nearby a group of ambulances and hearses were parked.

Five in Serious Condition.

Of the miners who were rescued, five were in such serious condition from having inhaled gas that they were taken to St. Mary's Hospital in Centralia, two miles north of the mine. One of these men was being given blood transfusions and oxygen. Those less seriously affected by the gas were put on cots in the Centralia Community Center gymnasium; seven men lay there. Others were able to go home with their families.

Walter J. Johnson, general superintendent said, "All we know is that there was an explosion and that there was gas. The explosion occurred at about 3:35 p.m., a half hour before the miners were to go off duty.

Explosion Laid to Dust.

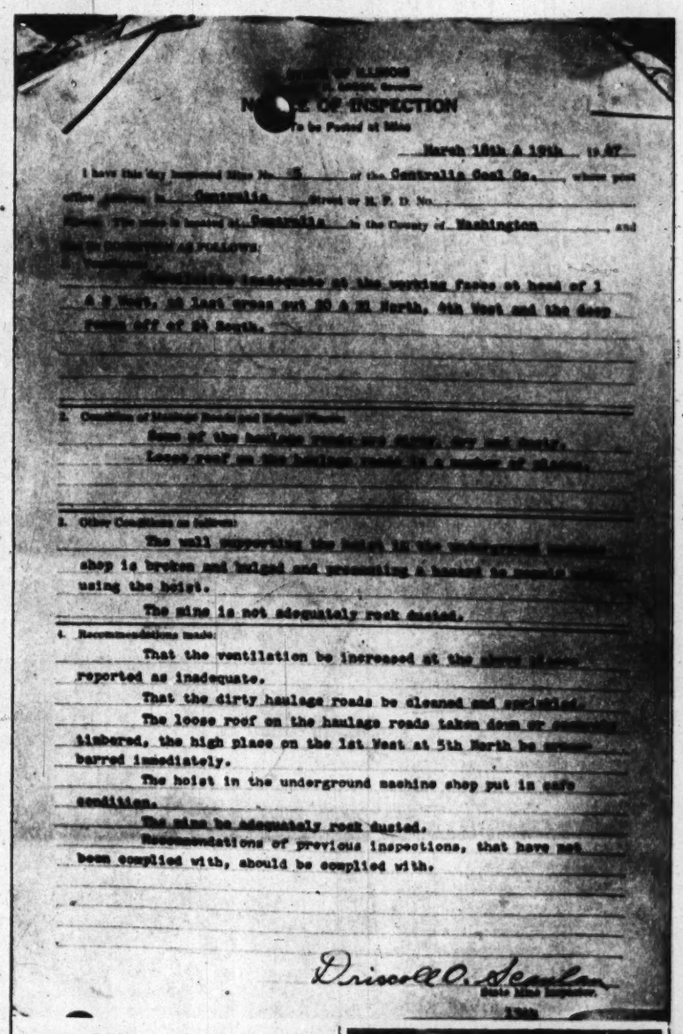
John Ritter, assistant chief of the Illinois State Police, said the explosion was caused by dust, combined with normal blasting of coal.

The mine inspector's earliest warning, among those still posted in the mine wash rooms, declared: "Coal in this mine is extremely dry. An excessive amount of dust is in suspension during cutting and loading operations.

"The dust is an explosion hazard and also injurious to the health and safety of the men working around the machines."

The same complaint was repeated in subsequent notices. These notices kept urging that the inspector's recommendations be followed.

Nov. 18, 1946, for instance, the inspector warned: "Ventilation inadequate at working faces . . . Bad air is entering intake air current from three abandoned south sections. Advance workings not rock-dusted (a precaution against excessive dust)."



NOTICE OF INSPECTION

March 18th & 19th 19 47

I have this day inspected Mine No. 5 of the Centralia Coal Co., whose post office address is Centralia, Illinois. The mine is located at Centralia in the County of Washington and State of Illinois, AS FOLLOWS:

Examination Conducted at the working faces at head of 1 & 2 West, 2d East cross cut 30 A 31 North, 4th West and the deep room off of 29 South.

2. Condition of Mine and Mining Machinery:
Some of the haulage roads are dusty, dry and dusty.
Loose roof on the haulage roads in a number of places.

3. Other Conditions as follows:
The wall supporting the hoist at the underground machine shop is broken and bulged and presenting a hazard to persons using the hoist.
The mine is not adequately rock dusted.

4. Recommendations made:
That the ventilation be increased at the above places reported as inadequate.
That the dirty haulage roads be cleaned and sprinkled.
The loose roof on the haulage roads taken down or adequately timbered, the high place on the 1st West at 5th North be adequately barred immediately.
The hoist in the underground machine shop put in safe condition.
The mine be adequately rock dusted.
Recommendations of previous inspections, that have not been complied with, should be complied with.

Driscoll A. Scanlan
State Mine Inspector.

Inspector's report which was posted at the mine the week before the disaster.

Recommended Sealing Area.

It was pointed out that some entries were being worked toward an area which had been sealed off, and which connected with a nearby abandoned mine. The inspector recommended that the north sections of the mine be sealed off.

Another complaint of "inadequate ventilation" and excessive dust was made last Jan. 21.

Last week, in addition to urging that previous recommendations be followed, the inspector repeated that dust control measures were not adequate and recommended further, that "dirty haulage roads be cleaned and sprinkled."

Questioned About Enforcement.

A Post-Dispatch reporter asked Robert M. Medill, director of the Illinois Department of Mines and Minerals, if safety measures recommended by state inspectors had to be complied with or were merely suggestions.

"We have the power to close a mine if we consider it is operating in too hazardous a fashion," he replied.

Asked why recommendations repeatedly made by Inspector Scanlan were not enforced, Medill said, "We went through a war. While the war was on, we didn't dare get too tough, because we needed the coal. Since then, there have been a couple of strikes (by the United Mine Workers).

"Despite what has happened, the company has made a lot of improvements in the last 18 months. We didn't think its shortcomings were serious enough to warrant shutting the mine. You can go to almost any mine and find similar reports."

Medill, who made a hurried automobile trip from Southeastern Kansas to the scene of the disaster here, said the natural assumption was that "a shot" meaning a blast to loosen coal had stirred up dust and produced an explosion of such concussive force part of the mine's ventilating system was wrecked.

Rock dust, spread in mines for just such an eventuality, raises a curtain around the blast and tends to localize it.

"If dynamite blasts caused the explosion, as may well have been the case," Medill continued, "all the miners should have been out of the workings except the crew doing the shooting. In other words, there should have been only seven men in the mine at the time, not more than 100.

Asked about the trapped men's chances of survival he said, "there is just a long chance there might be some alive."

Medill reported that the Federal Bureau of Mines has joined in the rescue operations and in investigation of the explosion.

The Centralia Coal Co. is a subsidiary of Bell and Zoller Coal Co. of Chicago. W. P. Young of Chicago is president of the parent firm and vice president of the Centralia firm.

All Illinois miners who belong to the United Mine Workers receive a current base rate of $1.18½ an hour. This rate is for a 35-hour week. Additional work carries the overtime rate of $1.78 an hour. It was estimated last year that because of heavy production schedules miners in the Illinois fields would earn about $3500 annually, at the present scale, which was negotiated last May.

—By a Post-Dispatch Staff Photographer.
DRISCOLL SCANLAN
State Mine Inspector.

Story of Survivor.

Typical of the account of the explosion told by survivors was the story told by August Holzhauer, a veteran of 35 years in the Centralia mine.

"I was working with a crew of 12 men near the base of the shaft," he said, "when a puff of smoke swept in and the power lights failed. I didn't hear any blast, but I knew what had happened.

"I got to the pit car. On the way, in the west entry, I found Johnnie Lorenzeni. It was pretty smoky there and he was in a bad way. I took him on the cage with me, and when I hit the fresh air at the top I passed out.

"That was my first accident, and it'll be the last. I'm not going back. I'm through."

Rescue squads, early in their work, found the body of Mark Watson, 65-year-old Centralia miner, and brought it to the surface. Other bodies were ignored, Johnson said, as the squads concentrated their efforts on attempts to save those who might still be alive.

Pumping Bad Air Out.

Rescue work advanced by a process of erecting lumber and fabric barricades, pumping the bad air out of the walled-off area, then moving on into the shafts. Truck loads of lumber was lowered into the mine to assist the frantic squads.

Rescue crews from Belleville, Herrin, Duquoin, Eldorado, West Frankfort, Springfield and other Illinois mine towns joined in the efforts to reach the trapped men. Harry Niermann, an assistant foreman, headed one rescue squad and was overcome by the gas.

Appeals for help broadcast immediately after the explosion brought 50 ambulances to the scene. Cots for the injured were sent from the Scott Field Army air base. Red Cross relief workers came from St. Louis. Blood plasma and pulmotor equipment were rushed to the scene. White-aproned nuns of the Felician Nursing Order and priests with windbreakers over their cassocks aided in caring for the injured.

Thirteen pieces of special equipment for resuscitating gas victims were collected by the St. Louis Chapter of the Red Cross from City Hospital in St. Louis and Lambert-St. Louis Field and taken to the mine. Four nurses from St. Mary's Hospital, Richmond Heights, volunteered to go to Centralia to assist with the work there and the Ohio Chemical Co., 4116 Olive street, sent a quantity of blood plasma.

Governor Pledges Aid.

Gov. Dwight H. Green of Illinois declared that "every resource of the state is being thrown into the rescue efforts and will be placed at the disposal of the families of these men." He announced earlier that he would go to Centralia to oversee rescue work, but later it was announced he was prevented from going by a cold and fever.

T. P. Sullivan, director of the Illinois Department of Public Safety, and William E. Kaiser, chairman of the Industrial Commission of Illinois, both were in Centralia, investigating the mine disaster.

At Springfield, Ill., State Representative Paul Powell, House Democratic minority leader, said his party would demand an investigation to discover if the explosion could have been prevented.

Powell also said his party would demand that the State Mines and Minerals Department report on the activities of its mine inspectors, who were accused by a mine operator recently of "shaking down" operators for contributions to the campaign fund of Russell W. Root, Republican candidate for mayor of Chicago.

Order at the mine scene was being maintained by state officials, miners, state police, deputy sheriffs and soldiers from Scott Field.

Among those who were brought out alive were Holzhauer, Earl C. Wilkinson, Scott Ward, Lynn Sharp, Settimo Pollacci, Fred Shaw, Lawrence Strehe, John Lorenzini, Henry Zeigler, Harry Gutzler, Henry Goforth, Stephen Ben Kirkland, Guy Baldridge, Clemenze Zinkevicz, Gus Harting, Ted Kell, George Reid, Walter Sundermeyer, Fred Bright, Jack Pick, William Rowekamp, Harry Greathouse, Joseph Vancil Jr., George Cruse, William Oesteich, Don Soper, Manzie Gregory, William Ferkle and Floyd L. Weigle.

Rescue Workers Overcome.

Rescue workers overcome, besides Niermann, were Edmund Dunn, Charles Ford and Era Boles.

Boles, interviewed at the Community Center emergency hospital, told the story of the first efforts to rescue the trapped men.

"I went down with the first crew about 7 p.m. (yesterday). We were down about two and a half hours. We brought out four men, all that were alive out of a group of 20," he said.

"I carried a stretcher from the point where we picked the men up in the south passage to within about 50 feet of the shaft. I had taken off my mask in the good air, but I must have had a snoot full, because suddenly I couldn't stand up any more.

"I don't think there's much chance for the others down there."

"Dead Lying Close Together."

William Merkle and Harry Gutzler, who operate an engine-hauling coal cars in the mine, related they saw 16 or 17 men in a group, all but four of whom were dead, shortly after they observed. "a rush of dust." Merkle said the dead "were all lying close together."

"Gutzler and I took the four who were alive to the cage, and we all went up to the surface," Merkle continued, "this is my second mine accident—the other was in Sandoval, Ill., and 17 were killed. It's a bad life. I don't think I'll ever go back in a mine after what I saw today."

14 Bodies Counted.

Elmer H. Baird, a "face boss" at the mine, after a four-hour shift doing rescue work in the mine, reported that he had counted 14 bodies.

"I may be chicken-hearted," he said, "but every time I'd lie down to rest and close my eyes I'd see the bodies lyin' there. I'm not going home or leave here until its over.

"I tell you it's pretty tough to pass up the bodies of your buddies, looking for those still alive.

"I'm not saying how it happened—only what could have happened. That is, those men heard the 'whoosh' of an explosion and ran out of their workings into the main passageway for fresh air.

"Then the fan stopped, the air reversed, and the 'black damp' probably doubled back and got them. As I say, that might have happened."

Those rescued from the mine were all taken out last night, the last at about 10:30 o'clock. Today, families of the trapped men could only wait. Scanlan said no effort would be made to remove bodies until ventilation is restored, which means that a week might elapse before rescue squads reach the end of the longest passageway, about three and a half miles from the entrance.

In Operation Since 1908.

The mine had been worked since 1908 and employed 265 men in all. It produced 2200 to 3200 tons of soft coal a day. All operations were on a single level, 540 feet down.

If all of the trapped miners are lost it will be the worst mine disaster in Illinois since the Cherry Mine tragedy of 1909, and the worst nationally since 195 men were lost at Mather, Pa., in 1928. The last major Illinois mine disaster was at Moweaqua, Ill., Dec. 23, 1932, when 54 miners lost their lives.

COAL MINE DISASTERS IN UNITED STATES: PLACES, DATES AND NUMBER KILLED

Major coal mine disasters in the United States:

PLACE.	DATE.	KILLED
Monongah, W. Va., Dec. 6, 1907	—	361
Dawson, N. M., Oct. 22, 1913	—	263
Cherry, Ill., Nov. 13, 1909	—	259
Jacobs Creek, Pa., Dec. 19, 1907	—	239
Scofield, Utah., May 1, 1900	—	200
Mather, Pa., May 19, 1928	—	195
Cook Creek, Tenn., May 19, 1902	—	184
Eccles, W. Va., April 28, 1914	—	181
Castle Grate, Utah., March 8, 1924		171
Barley, W. Va., Jan. 10, 1940	—	91
Red Lodge, Mont., Feb. 27, 1943	—	75
Braidwood, Ill., Feb. 14, 1883	—	69
Mowequa, Ill., Dec. 23, 1932	—	54
Royalton, Ill., Oct. 27, 1914	—	52
Seigler, Ill., April 13, 1905	—	49
Seigler, Ill., Jan. 10, 1909	—	28
Pineville, Ky., Dec. 26, 1945	—	24
Royalton, Ill., Sept. 28, 1918	—	21
West Frankfort, Ill., Jan. 9, 1928		21

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 26

'We're Going to Have an Explosion,' Miner Who Was Killed Told Wife

—By a Post-Dispatch Staff Photographer.

MRS. EDITH CARTER, holding photograph of her husband, Arthur, and herself.

'Be a Good Soldier' When It Comes, He Urged Her Three Weeks Before Centralia Blast.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 5

By HARRY WILENSKY
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 5.—"Tootsie, we're going to have an explosion in that mine if they don't clean it up. The coal dust is so heavy our shoes are full of it all day long. Whenever that explosion comes I want you to hold yourself together and be a good soldier."

These prophetic words were spoken by Arthur H. Carter to his wife, Edith, three weeks before the blast that killed 111 men in the Centralia Coal Co.'s Mine No. 5.

"He talked about the dust in the mine all the time," Mrs. Carter told the Post-Dispatch today. "He said the top (tunnel roofing) was bad, too, because they wouldn't put in enough timbers to make it safe. One day a fall of rock missed him by inches. It came so close the other men thought he was pinned under it."

Carter, a track layer who had worked in the mine off and on for 10 years, had been away from work for two weeks because of influenza, and had returned to the mine only a week before the disaster.

"He was one of the first to go," his wife reported. "He wasn't with the group that lived for an hour or two and left notes."

Carter was identified through rubber pads found in his shoes. Years ago he had broken the toes of both feet when a team of farm mules bolted and his feet caught in the traces. To protect his toes he had made pads of sponge rubber for himself.

The miner's wife, an attractive woman with large blue eyes and a mass of smoke-gray hair, was one of the spectators on hand when the Senate public lands subcommittee opened its investigation of the explosion.

"My neighbors think, because I'm not sitting down crying until my nose gets red as a tomato that I'm heartless," she said. "But I'm doing just what my husband asked me to. He wanted me to be a good soldier, and a soldier fights. I want to see these investigators do something to prevent this from happening to other miners and their wives."

To earn her living, Mrs. Carter, who is 37 years old, hopes to find work as a sewing teacher. She had married the miner in 1944, but had known him for many years. They celebrated their birthdays shortly before the disaster—his on March 10 and hers on the twenty-second.

"It was a very quiet celebration," she said wistfully. "We stayed home. A miner who has lost two weeks' pay because of sickness doesn't have much money for celebrating, you know. But it was fine to be together."

Carter, who was 54, was a native of Cambridgeshire, England, and had boasted of having played as a boy with the future King George.

"Art's grandfather was a warden on the royal estate at Sandringham, and Art used to tell how he had played with the King, whom everybody called Teddy in those days," she said.

Mrs. Carter formerly lived in East St. Louis, where she has two sisters, Mrs. Virgil Kramlich, 835 North Fifty-fourth street, and Mrs. John Tabor, 2104 North Fifty-sixth street, and two brothers, Clinton and Roy Rea.

CENTRALIA MINE UNDER CONTROL OF CHICAGO GROUP

W. P. Young Heads Operation of 3 Concerns With Interlocking Officers, Directors.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 29

W. P. Young of Chicago is the effective head of operations at the Centralia (Ill.) coal mine where 111 miners died after an explosion which had been predicted in repeated warnings of unsafe conditions in the mine.

Walter J. Johnson is general superintendent of the mine site and Harry Niermann serves as his assistant.

From his desk at 307 North Michigan avenue, Chicago, Young exercises effective control over the mine near Centralia, over the Bell & Zoller Coal Co., sales agent for the mine's output, and over the Bell and Zoller Coal & Mining Co., a $1,000,000 corporation with other mining interests, the Post-Dispatch was told by J. W. Broadway, secretary of all three firms. The Centralia Coal Co. is capitalized at $400,000 and the sales agency at $20,000.

Broadway said there is no corporate connection between the three firms. Officers and directors of the three firms, however, are interlocking. All the men who exercise control over the firms are residents of Chicago, Broadway said.

Officers of the Centralia Coal Co. are H. F. McDonald, president; Young, vice president; Broadway, secretary, and C. W. Peterson, treasurer. Directors are McDonald, Young, H. E. Bell and H. E. Baldwin.

Officers of the Bell and Zoller Coal Co. are McDonald, president; Broadway, secretary and Peterson, treasurer. Directors are Bell, Young, Peterson and Baldwin.

Officers of the Bell and Zoller Coal and Mining Co. are Young, president; Broadway, secretary, and Peterson, treasurer. Directors are Young, McDonald, Peterson, Baldwin, H. E. Bell and John Bell.

RIVAL COAL UNION IS OBSERVING ONE DAY OF MOURNING

1700 Members of PMW Local Vote $7800 to Families of Men Killed in Mine Disaster.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 31

By a Special Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

BENLD, Ill., March 31—The 1700 members of Local 1 of the Progressive Mine Workers of America, bitter rival of John L. Lewis's United Mine Workers, remained away from the pits today as a mark of respect for the 111 miners who died in last week's explosion at Centralia.

In addition, they voted to contribute $7800 to families of the men lost in the disaster. A delegation from the union was in Centralia to attend memorial services and present the miners' gift to relatives of the victims.

John McCann, president of the PMWA, announced his organization had voted not to join the six-day walkout called by John L. Lewis to mourn Centralia's dead. The Progressives have 12,000 members in Southern Illinois coal fields.

Andrew Steed, president of Local 1, announced, however, that members voted yesterday to stay off the job today "to observe a day of mourning for the Centralia disaster victims."

The Progressives seceded from Lewis's union in the fall of 1932 over a wage scale disagreement.

The Progressives revolted as a "rank and file" group when Lewis agreed to reduce the $6.10 daily scale to $5 because of economic conditions. After Lewis's union was suspended from the American Federation of Labor because of his allegiance to the CIO, the Progressives joined the AFL. They withdrew from the federation when the United Mine Workers reaffiliated.

At the time of secession, the PMWA said its union would be "a middle-of-the-road union. It will not be bound to the vicious policies and stupid rules which have hampered the effectiveness of the rank and file of older trade unions in the United States and Canada and hindered them from manifesting their will and control of their own organization."

35 BODIES OUT OF MINE; HOPE FOR 76 FADES; SAFETY PLEA SENT GOV. GREEN IN '46

RESCUE WORKERS EXPECT DEATH TOLL OF 111 AT ILLINOIS SHAFT

Relatives Refuse to Give Up — No Indication Workers Were Able to Barricade Selves Off From Gas.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 27

By HARRY WILENSKY
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., March 27 — Hope virtually was abandoned today for the 76 men still trapped in the Centralia Coal Co. mine as 18 additional bodies were brought to the surface, bringing the number of bodies recovered to 35.

Rescue workers expected a total death toll of 111, stating the men still in the mine had "no chance at all."

With about half of the mine passageways already explored, some of which are nearly four miles long, rescue workers said they had seen no indication that any of the miners had barricaded themselves against the spreading gasses which followed Tuesday's explosion.

All of the 31 survivors of the disaster were removed in the first few hours hours after the explosion. Only bodies were removed yesterday and today. Sixteen bodies were removed last night. One miner's body had been removed soon after the blast.

Relatives Still Have Hope.

The prediction that the death toll would reach 111 was made by William E. Rowekamp, rescue leader and recording secretary of the Centralia local of the AFL United Mine Workers of America. Other rescue workers agreed that it was extremely unlikely that any of the men remaining in the mine would be brought out alive, although relatives of the missing men continued to hope. Rescue work went on at top speed at "Mine No. 5" at the little town of Wamac, about two miles south of Centralia, which is 65 miles east of St. Louis.

There were 142 miners in the Centralia mine at the time of the explosion. If the death toll stands at 111 it will be the worst mine disaster in the nation for 19 years, since 195 men lost their lives at Mather, Pa., in 1928.

A heavy snow fell over the grim, waiting families of the miners as the second group of bodies were removed from the shaft this morning. The crowd had dwindled, as hope waned with every passing hour.

Bodies to Ambulances.

Bodies were placed in ambulances and sped to the garage nearby which had been converted into a temporary morgue. There the wives, daughters, sons and brothers of the missing miners gathered to try to identify the bodies.

Among those who waited at the mine was Fred W. Busse, a St. Louis city electrician who lives at 5257 Theodosia avenue, St. Louis. His brother, John Busse, was one of the men trapped in the mine. Fred Busse sought in vain for permission to enter the mine and join the search; he had worked in the mine 20 years ago and said he believed he could find his brother.

Removal of the bodies was begun last night. A hush fell over the crowd at the pit head as the miners' cage came up out of the shaft with the burden which would disclose whether rescue crews had found live men or dead bodies in the subterranean passages thus far penetrated.

Scene As Bodies Are Removed.

On a stretcher carried by four workers lay a miner, his heavy shoes extending over the edge of the sagging canvas. But the blanket in which the man was wrapped covered his face.

The first body recovered by rescue crews was brought up at 6:35 p.m. yesterday, just 27 hours after the disastrous blast. Photographers' flash bulbs stabbed the gathering darkness as the victim was placed in an ambulance.

The cage disappeared back into the shaft, and two minutes later emerged with a second body. As the wail of an ambulance siren faded in the distance, the third body was brought up. Then came a fourth, fifth and sixth in rapid succession.

The realization that only dead men were being brought out did something to the crowd of tight-lipped relatives, begrimed miners, nurses, clergymen and newspaper men. The crowd surged forward, and burly policemen began to berate the spectators and push back people.

Mine employes linked hands to form a path for the procession of stretchers from the pit head to the gaping ambulance doors. The line of undertakers' machines seemed endless; as one ambulance loaded and drove away, another moved into its place with almost military precision.

Only the fervent hopes of relatives of the miners kept alive any belief that some in the mine still remained safe.

"I think I'll see my dad again," said young Wesley Fetgatter. "He's worked in this mine 37 years and if there was a possibility of escape I know he made it."

Adolf Lenzini said he believed his father, Pete Lenzini, "may be in one of the far back entries . . . if they had a chance . . ."

Search May Take Week.

Driscoll O. Scanlan, Illinois State Mine Inspector who had attempted in vain to have anti-explosion precautions taken at the mine, said it might take a week to probe to the end of the great passages within the mine. Mule power was being used in preference to machinery for fear of electrical sparks detonating gasses.

Emil Schuster of Sawyerville, Ill., a member of one of the rescue squads, described his experience in the mine when the squads brought out the dead miners last night.

"They looked as if they had fallen asleep just before we found them," Schuster said. "They were lying back against the walls or sprawled lazily on the floor, about two miles from the shaft, and didn't appear to have been hurt by the concussion of the blast.

Gas Killed Men.

"It was the gas that got them. "We have only the little lights on our caps to work with down there. We'd stoop over each man we found and see if he was breathing or showed any sign of life. If he didn't, we'd keep on going.

"About two and a half miles from the shaft we saw the first effects of the blast. It looked like a cyclone had come down those tunnels, tearing up railroad ties, snapping telephone and light wires and throwing braces around like toothpicks.

"We wrapped the bodies of the men in blankets as we found them and put them on cars pulled by a mule.

"The mule, of course, wore a gas mask just as we did."

Funeral Arrangements.

Identification of the dead was being completed at the temporary morgue today. Families of the men were arranging for funeral services.

Mayor O. W. Wright called a meeting of a representative of each stricken family, today, to plan mass services for the mine victims. Church leaders began accepting contributions for a community floral offering.

William E. Kaiser, chairman of the Illinois Industrial Commission, came here from Chicago to set hearing dates on compensation for families of the dead miners.

It was reported that the state compensation law would provide sums ranging from $4800 to $6000 per family, varying with the number of dependents.

Families of the victims also will receive $100 for each of the men killed, from the death benefit fund of the State United Mine Workers union.

Families of the victims will not get immediate aid from the United Mine Workers health and welfare fund, but apparently will get such aid eventually. The amount of such aid cannot be estimated yet, UMWA officials said.

The fund now totals $15,000,000 derived from a royalty of 5 cents a ton on bituminous coal mined since a settlement of last spring's 55-day strike, in which this fund was at issue. Administration of the fund is in the hand of a three-man board—but Secretary of Interior J. A. Krug has not yet appointed the operators' representative.

Delay in appointment of the operators' representative has been laid by the Department of Interior to failure of some of the operators to concur in the principle of royalty collection. The union has appointed a board member and the union member and the operators' member are to appoint the third member of the board. This group then will set up standards and regulations under which benefits will be paid.

Removing Body From Centralia Mine

—By a Post-Dispatch Staff Photographer.

Body of miner taken from Centralia Mine No. 5 being placed in ambulance early today.

LEWIS CHARGES NEGLIGENCE BY KRUG 'MURDERED' MINERS

Tells Senate Group Secretary of Interior 'Failed to Enforce Laws'—Opposes Appointment of Boyd.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 28

WASHINGTON, March 28 (AP) —John L. Lewis said today the "111 coal miners, more or less," who lost their lives in a Centralia (Ill.) mine explosion "have been murdered because of the criminal negligence of J. A. Krug."

Lewis, president of the AFL United Mine Workers, testified briefly before a Senate public lands subcommittee considering the nomination of James Boyd, dean of the Colorado School of Mines, to be director of the Bureau of Mines.

Lewis said the appointment was made by President Truman through Krug, Secretary of the Interior, and asked the committee and the Congress not to confirm Boyd.

Lewis had listened to Boyd tell of his qualifications and when Boyd was excused he took his place at the committee table and began abruptly:

"Some 111 mine workers more or less have, since I appeared here to testify last week, been murdered because of the criminal negligence of J. A. Krug."

Lewis asserted there was "too much blood smeared over our coal" and said: "He (Krug) has failed to enforce the laws, the safety code of the industry which he negotiated with this witness.

"He now sends down here, through the President, the name of Mr. Boyd for the directorship. The basis of Boyd's testimony has been that he possesses no qualifications for the position.

"By his own admission he knows no problems of the coal mining industry.

'Too Much Book Learning.'

"There is too much book learning and too little practical knowledge—when we read of coal miners dying every day.

"How do we know if he will employ qualified talent if he has no practical knowledge himself.

"There has been too much blood smeared over our coal. Here is the disaster at Centralia, Ill. Another may come tonight or tomorrow.

"I suppose we might all be sorry, but that will not help the anguish of the bereaved."

Lewis testified "in the name of all the coal miners" that the miners themselves "do not want to work in their mines with the only protection coming from men appointed by J. A. Krug."

Lewis said that if the committee members doubted his statement they should "consult the coal miners. Let them go to Centralia today."

"I ask the Senate of the United States," Lewis said, "to give us a man who has some consideration for the lives of the men."

As abruptly as he sat down, Lewis got up at the end of his brief testimony without any questions being asked him by committee members.

Boyd testified that he never had been employed in the coal mining industry, but asserted he had a knowledge of its functioning.

ILLINOIS MINE CHECKS REQUIRED EVERY 2 MONTHS

Law Gives State Inspectors Power to Stop Operations for Safety Violations.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 28

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., March 28 (UP)—Every coal mine in Illinois must be inspected at least once every two months, a check of state mining laws showed today. This inspection must be made by a state or county mine inspector.

The law provides that every mine employing 10 or more men must be inspected personally by a state inspector at least once every three months.

The law requires the inspector to make sure that the mine ventilation is satisfactory, that the legal code of signals is in operation and available to all employes, that "every necessary precaution" is taken to insure the health and safety of the workmen, and that all provisions of the mining laws are complied with.

Inspectors have authority to stop operation of any mine in case of "continued failure" to comply with the law after being ordered to do so. The inspectors also may "remove any offending person or persons from the mine until the law is complied with."

Violations of the state mining laws are defined as misdemeanors, punishable by fines up to $500 or imprisonment in county jail up to six months, or both. Violations include refusing to obey a mine inspector or attempting to "obstruct or interfere" with him.

State inspectors are appointed by the Governor from a list certified as competent by the State Mining Board. One inspector is named for each of the state's 14 inspection districts, plus two inspectors for the state at large.

Inspectors are not civil service employes, but the law requires applicants to pass a state mining board examination on mining operation and safety procedures.

County inspectors are appointed by county boards or commissioners to assist the state inspector for their district, if requested by the state inspector.

Besides examining applicants for mine inspector, the mining board examines applicants for certificates of competency as mine managers, mine examiners, hoisting engineers and electrical hoisting engineers. Men holding these jobs in mines must have the certificates, which are issued by the board.

The director of the State Department of Mines and Minerals is the executive officer of the five-man mining board. He executes and enforces its orders.

State law also requires all coal miners to have a certificate of competency. These certificates are granted by another agency, the miners' examining board, consisting of four members appointed by the director of the Mines and Minerals Department with approval of the Governor.

Applicants for miners' certificates of competency must pass an examination given by the board. The law requires this examination to include "at least 12 practical questions" on mining.

According to the State Mines and Minerals Department, miners may have the mines in which they work examined at any time by state inspectors upon request.

The mines also are subject to federal inspection and must be examined on every operating day by the mine's own examiners.

MOVE IN HOUSE FOR COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE MINE DISASTER

Proposal for 5-Man Board By Vursell of Illinois, Who Tells of Complaints About Colliery By 4 Workers.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 27

By a Washington Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

WASHINGTON, March 27—Representative Charles W. Vursell (Rep.) of Salem, Ill., moved in the House today for appointment of a 5-member House committee to investigate the Centralia disaster.

His motion followed action yesterday in the Senate, where the Department of the Interior, its Bureau of Mines, and Interior Secretary J. A. Krug were charged with responsibility for the Illinois fatalities. The Interior Department has been operating the Centralia and other soft coal mines since Government seizure last May 22.

Vursell said that a committee of four miners from the Centralia mine visited him when he was at home recently, and told him they were worried about safety conditions. Three of the four, he said, have been named in dispatches as having been killed in the disaster.

Senator Styles Bridges (Rep.), New Hampshire, and Senator C. W. Brooks (Rep.), Illinois, were leaders in the Senate demand for an inquiry into failure of federal authorities to enforce proper regulations at Centralia.

A resolution by Brooks, calling for an investigation by the Senate Committee on Public Lands, was adopted yesterday, but before its adoption, was amended by Senator Barkley (Dem.), Kentucky, to provide for inquiry into the responsibility of state and local officials, as well as of the federal inspection service.

Text of Resolution.

The resolution, adopted by voice vote, and including the Barkley amendments, is:

"Resolved, that the committee on Public Lands, or any duly authorized subcommittee thereof, is authorized and directed to make a full and complete investigation of the mine explosion which occurred at the Centralia Coal Mine Number 5, Wamac, Ill., on March 25, 1947, with a view to determining the cause of such explosion, whether all mine safety requirements and provisions, federal or local, were being observed, and whether adequate inspection was being maintained.

"The committee shall report its findings to the Senate as soon as possible, including its findings as to the negligence, if any, of any agency or official of the United States or of any state, governmental boy, or any other person or corporation in connection with such explosion.

"The expenses of the committee under this resolution, which shall not exceed $5000, shall be paid from the contingent fund of the Senate upon vouchers approved by the chairman of the committee."

The Senate discussion began soon after Welly Hopkins attorney for the United Mine Workers, had issued a statement charging that the Bureau of Mines found "safety violations of the type which led to the disaster" when it inspected the Centralia mine last November.

Attack on Krug.

Brooks, offering his resolution, said the Federal government "has become so all-powerful in the last 15 years" that it should be held to responsibility "especially when its actions take human lives."

Bridges, speaking for adoption of the resolution, called Krug "the man directly responsible for the disaster" and "an arrogant bureaucrat" who, instead of supervising mine operation, has been "traveling all over the United States, campaigning for the Vice Presidency."

Democratic Senators charged that the Republican attack on the Interior Secretary was a partisan move. Senator Glen H. Taylor (Dem.), Idaho, said it was a well known fact that the Government has merely run up its flag over the mines, and has left the running of them to the operators.

Senator Scott Lucas (Dem.), Illinois, said safety code violations at the mines were nothing new. "I undertake to say," he said, "that they were going on at the Centralia mine long before the Government took over." (As disclosed by the Post-Dispatch yesterday, a series of warning notices posted at the Centralia mine by the Illinois State Mine Inspector dated from Dec. 13, 1945, or six months before Government seizure.)

To Name Special Group.

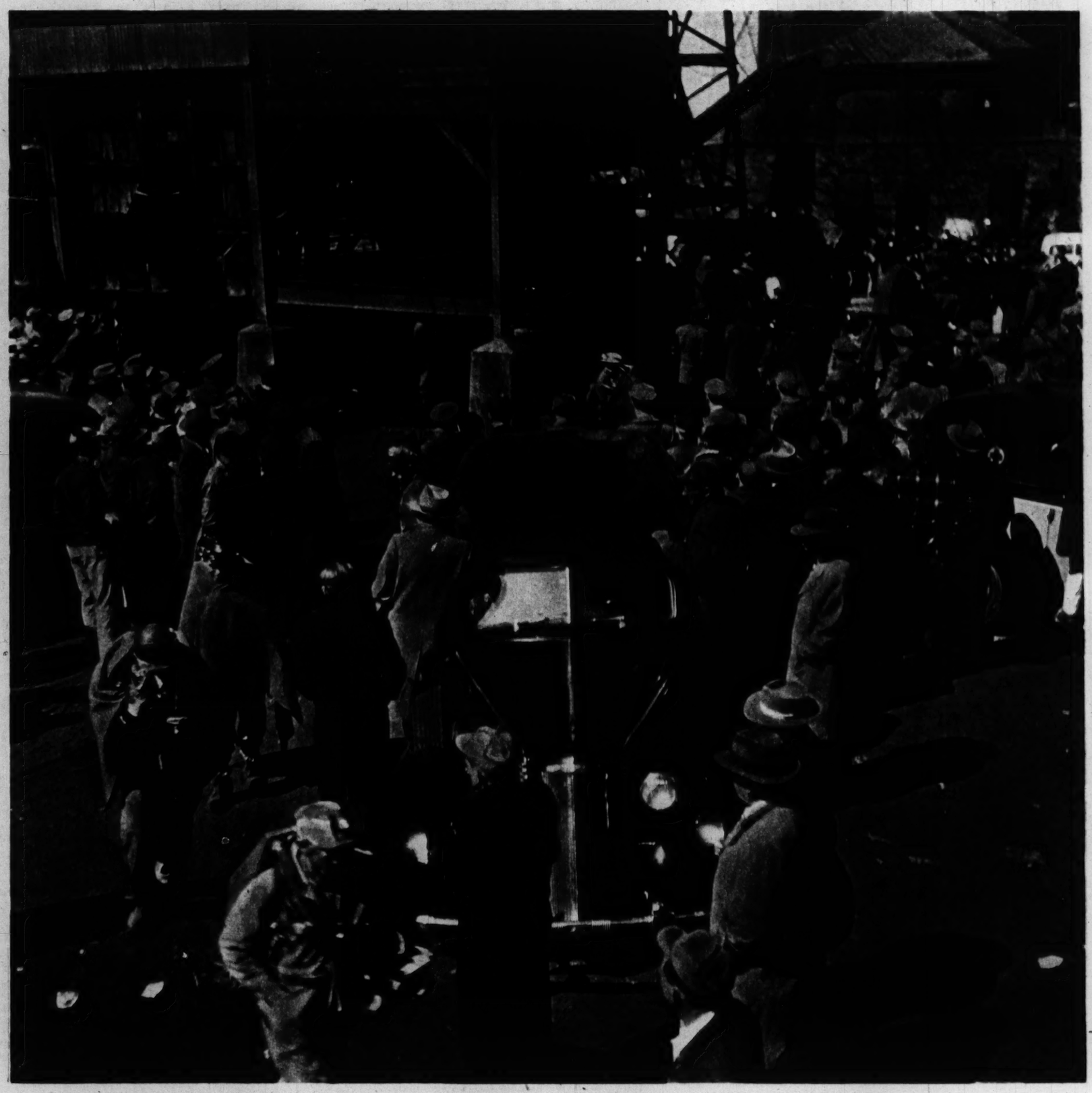
Chairman Hugh Butler (Rep.), Nebraska, of the Senate Public Lands Committee, said he expected to appoint a special subcommittee today to undertake the investigation. He said the committee would send its own investigator to the scene without delay.

Secretary Krug had no comment to make on the discussion. Navy Capt. N. H. Collisson, coal mines administrator under Krug, said he had sent two representatives to Centralia, and would have nothing to say about the disaster until hearing from them. Collisson said that, because of lack of personnel, his office does not check mines immediately to see if they have followed recommendations of safety inspectors. As a rule, they are not checked until the next regular Bureau of Mines inspection.

AS TRAGIC SEARCH WENT ON BELOW

In mine washhouse, Mrs. Larry Schymick tearfully receives clothes of her father, Charles Oestreich, a victim, from Henry Goforth, a survivor.

Mrs. Anna Tickus grieves for husband, Stanley, and son, Anthony, who died in mine.



Army blankets thrown about their shoulders, rescue workers trudge wearily from mine elevator past waiting ambulances, victims' relatives, officials. Search for trapped men was hampered by thick clouds of coal dust and gas in miles of subterranean passageways.

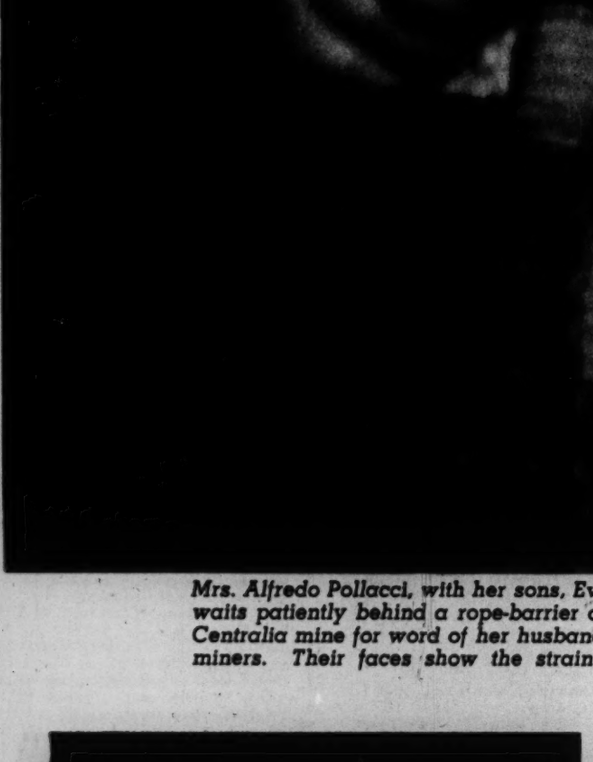
Each of 26 side entries off main tunnels had to be explored, sealed before progressing to next one. At first, bodies were left; searching squads were intent on saving any of the men who might be found alive. Rescuers, themselves veteran miners, risked lives to go below.

Young women anxiously ask rescue worker just out of pit about progress of search. Many watchers stayed throughout night, despite snowstorm.

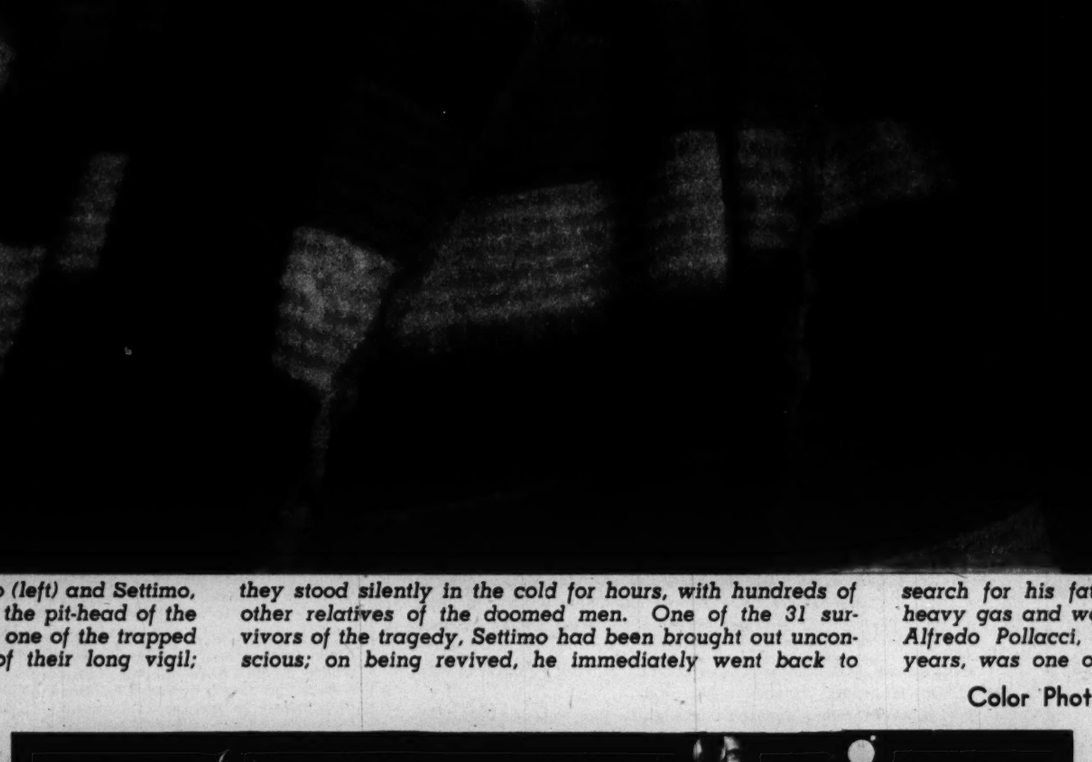
Members of relief rescue crew, heavily burdened with equipment, wait to descend into mine. Oxygen tanks on backs weigh 45 pounds; battery-powered lamps surmount safety helmets. Crews worked five-hour shifts.

Mrs. Alfredo Pollacci, with her sons, Evio (left) and Settimo, waits patiently behind a rope-barrier at the pit-head of the Centralia mine for word of her husband, one of the trapped miners. Their faces show the strain of their long vigil; they stood silently in the cold for hours, with hundreds of other relatives of the doomed men. One of the 31 survivors of the tragedy, Settimo had been brought out unconscious; on being revived, he immediately went back to search for his father. Again he was overcome by the heavy gas and was carried out by fellow rescue workers. Alfredo Pollacci, a miner for more than 50 of his 69 years, was one of the oldest men killed in the disaster.

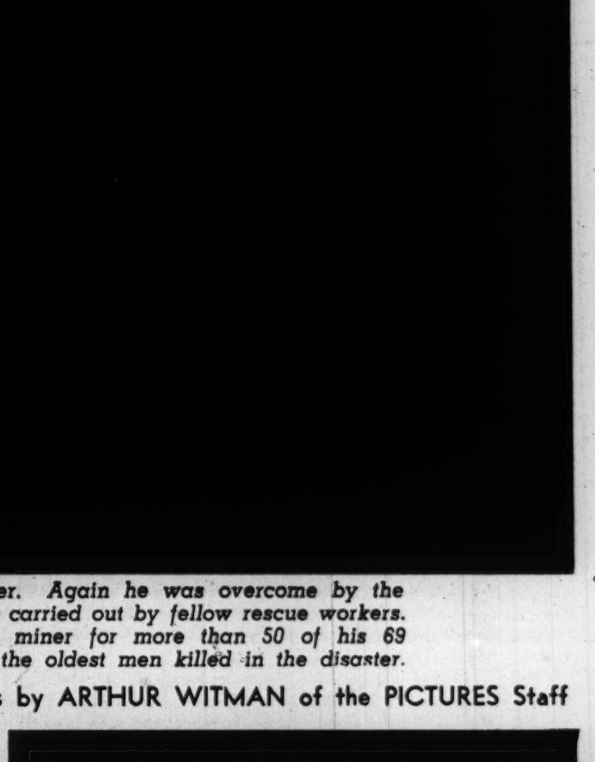
Color Photos by ARTHUR WITMAN of the PICTURES Staff



A woman prays near the mine shaft.



Begrimed rescue workers carrying one of the explosion victims to a first-aid station.



Anxiety creases the faces of waiting relatives.

MOST OF SAFETY VIOLATIONS CITED IN NOVEMBER FOUND AGAIN 5 DAYS BEFORE BLAST

Some of Conditions Viewed as Likely Cause of Centralia (Ill.) Disaster — Excessive Dust, Open-Flame Lamps, Lack of Gas Tests, Bad Ventilation Criticized.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 29

By GEORGE H. HALL
A Washington Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

WASHINGTON, March 29.

OUT of 60 articles of the federal mine safety code alleged to have been violated at the Centralia (Ill.), Coal Co.'s No. 5 mine last November, 51 still were being violated March 20, five days before the explosion that killed 111 men.

This is the burden of a report made last night to the Bureau of Mines by Frank Perz, a federal inspector who examined the Centralia pit from Nov. 4 to 6 and again from March 17 to 20.

Some of the conditions not corrected seemingly could have contributed to the blast either by causing it originally or by making it more serious.

Fred Hellmeyer, the company's chief electrician at the mine told the Associated Press he thought a "shot charge (explosive to loosen coal) improperly packed" had caused the explosion, and that a flash of flame swept through coal dust after the blast.

Renewed Complaints on Dangers.

The second report of Perz, as well as the earlier one, alleged that clouds of coal dust were found in some areas, that permissible explosives were fired with blasting caps and fuse instead of electric detonators, that there were insufficient tests for gas, that open-flame lamps were used and that ventilation was faulty.

In addition to the 51 alleged continuing violations, Perz said he found three news ones. He reported 13 improvements since his last inspection, which took care of nine of the previous violations.

Both inspections were made under regulations of the code of safety and practice adopted after the Government seized the mines. The United Mine Workers, the coal operators and the federal administrator participated in drafting the code. It went into effect last July 29.

List of Violations Still Existing.

Following is the list of alleged violations found by Perz last November which still existed when the inspectors returned last week:

Dense clouds of coal dust were present at the open-type electric motors throughout the tipple. Motors of dust-tight construction should be provided.

Excessive accumulations of coal dust were present throughout the tipple.

The opening in the floor at the discharge end of the raw coal conveyor was not provided with railings.

Timbers of sufficient length to use as crossbars were not provided in the working sections.

Safety posts, jacks or crossbars were not being used at the faces of numerous working places that required them.

Unsupported loose roof and overhanging ribs and brows were observed along practically all the room-entry and intermediate haulageways, and unsupported loose roof was observed along the roadways in a large number of working places.

The underground section explosive storage boxes were in entry crosscuts and abandoned room necks about 10 feet from tracks and power wires, whereas they should be at least 25 feet from roadways or power wires.

The permissible explosives were fired with blasting caps and fuse, whereas they should be fired only with electric detonators of proper strength and permissible shot-firing units.

Improper Ventilation Underground.

The mine was ventilated by one continuous air current and, as a result, a number of worked-out sections were not ventilated properly. The main intake air current should be divided into splits utilizing air crossings where needed.

A total of 135 men were employed underground on one split of air. The number should not be more than 100 to conform to the Illinois state mining law.

An air measurement of 3380 cubic feet a minute was obtained in one open crosscut and no air measurement could be obtained in another. Prompt action should be taken to provide a minimum of 6000 cubic feet of air a minute.

Two of the air samples collected in the inspection indicate that less than 19.5 per cent of oxygen was contained in them and one of the samples show more than .5 per cent of carbon monoxide. The air should be improved.

Stoppings between the intake and return air along the main haulageways were of wooden construction, whereas they should be of sohd, non-combustible material.

The ventilation doors at one haulage road were spaced about 70 feet apart, which required both doors to be open when trips passed through them. They should be spaced far enough apart to contain an entire trip and there should be sufficient leakage to prevent accumulations of methane gas between the doors.

The ventilation doors were found latched open in two instances. They should be kept closed except when being used.

Abandoned workings were not posted to warn persons against entering the territory.

The mine examiners started the examination of the mine at 11 p.m., which was eight hours after the first shift entered the mine. They should begin their examination not more than four hours before the first shift enters.

Working Places Not Tested for Gas.

The working places were not tested for gas during the working shift. They should be tested at least once each working shift while the men are in the mine, and oftener if necessary.

Excessive accumulations of coal dust were present on one main haulage road, all intermediate haulage roads and on the roadways of most of the working places.

The mine was very dry and dusty and an excessive amount of coal dust was raised during cutting, loading and other operations.

Rock dust (an explosion deterrent) was applied to within about 1000 feet of the faces of the entries, and rooms were not rock-dusted. All rooms and entries should be rock-dusted to within 60 feet of the faces.

Eight of the dust samples collected during the inspection were lower in incombustible content than was recommended for this mine.

The sides of the cages were open and the ends of the cages were not guarded when men were hoisted and lowered.

Four switch throws recently installed along a main haulage road were placed on the trolley-wire side instead of the clearance side.

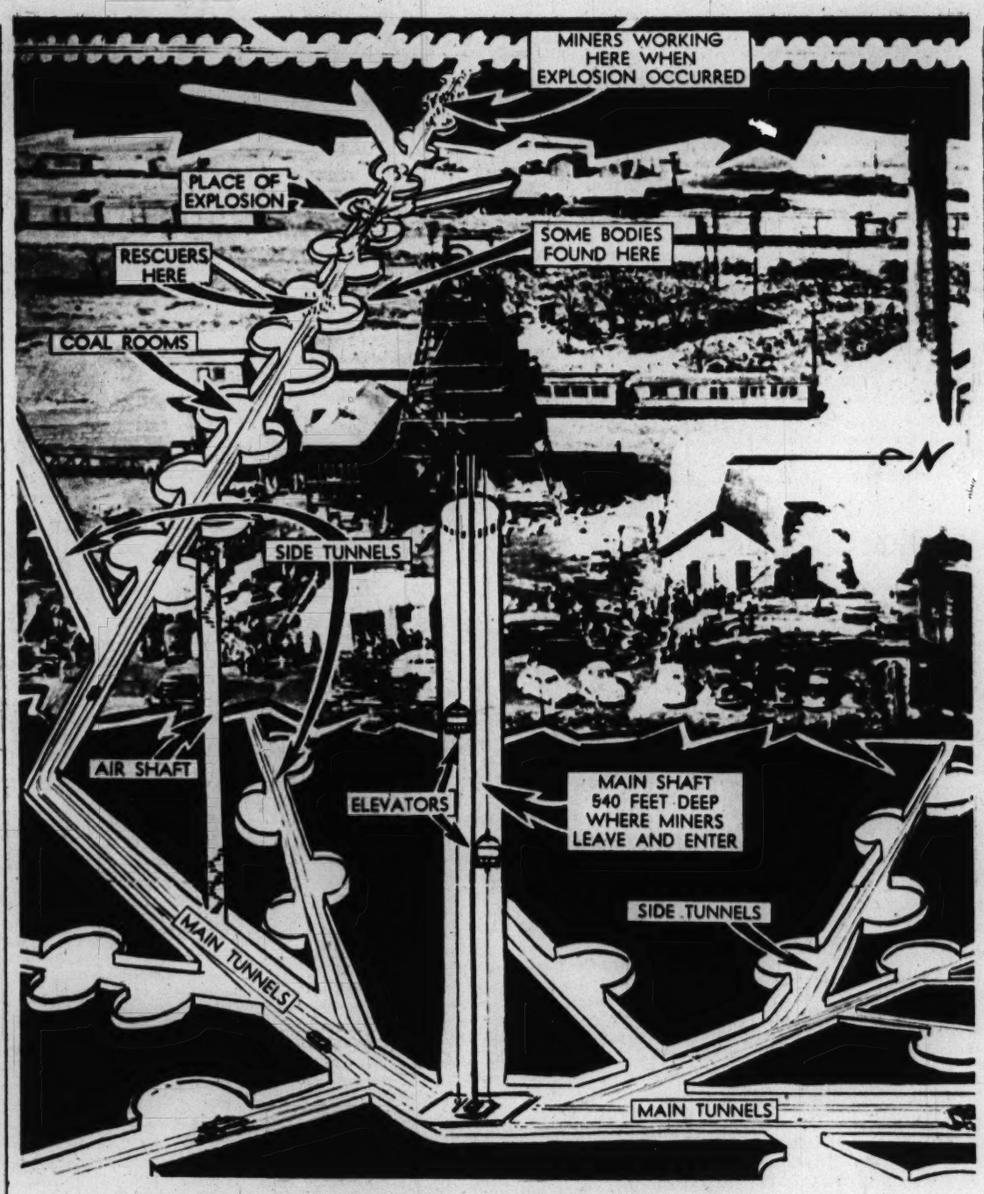
The main entries and room-panel developed recently did not have adequate clearance.

The clearance along the main and intermediate haulageways has been obstructed with road cleanings and mine waste.

Shelter holes were not provided along the main and intermediate haulageways that were developed recently. They should be spaced not more than 50 feet apart and in most cases should be opposite the trolley wire.

Locomotives were not equipped with devices for the derailing of carr and locomotives and did not have audible warning devices.

Stop blocks or derailing devices were not placed across the room or entry tracks to prevent cars from inadvertently being pushed or rolling into these places.



—Associated Press Photo.

Diagram superimposed on an Associated Press air view of Mine No. 5 of the Centralia Coal Co. showing the approximate layout of underground workings where 111 men died.

Men in man-trips rode under the trolley wire, whereas no person should ride under the trolley wire undess in a suitable covered man-car.

The trolley wire was not guarded at the man-trip station at the shaft bottom, and a contact hazard was present.

In many instances bare power wires in the working sections were installed by nailing them to the timbers. All such wires should be supported on insulators and should not touch combustible materials.

Cut-out switches were not provided at the beginning of most branch trolley or power lines.

The trolley and power wires in most of the working sections sagged excessively and touched timbers and door frames at many places.

The trolley and power wires were not guarded anywhere in the mine, except at the man-trip stations.

The frames of the mining machines and electric drills were not grounded.

Telephone service was not provided within several thousand feet of the working sections. Service from the surface to all working sections should be provided.

On-shift examinations for gas were not made to provide reasonable assurance that the workmen were protected where the non-permissible electric equipment was used.

Many of the trailing cables for portable underground equipment were not provided with overload protection at the nips.

The cutting chains of mining machines were not equipped with positive locking devices.

The exposed gears and sprockets in the tipple constituted a hazard.

From four to six barrels of lubricating oil and grease were stored in the abandoned room necks in each working section, sufficient for about two weeks' requirements. Storage places for oil and grease should be fireproof if more than two days' supply is maintained underground.

Signs indicating the directions to the escapeways were not posted.

Open-Flame Lamps in General Use.

All of the underground employes and officials, except the mine examiners, used open-flame carbide lamps for portable illumination. Only permissible electric car lamps should be used.

Underground employes did not carry positive means of identification.

Men were observed lighting matches during this inspection. Because of explosion and fire hazards, the carrying of matches or other flame-making devices underground should be prohibited.

About 5 per cent of the employes did not wear protective footwear.

Haulagemen and others working around moving equipment wore loose-fitting clothing. It should fit snugly.

The mine examiner for the night shift was not certified. He should hold a certificate of competency issued by the Illinois Department of Mines and Minerals.

Perz listed these additional alleged violations:

Shots (explosives) were fired at the end of the shift with all the men in the mine, and examinations for gas were not made immediately before and after blasting.

Two crosscuts, which should have been closed, were open.

White-painted markers, instead of permissible lights, were used on trips.

The inspector noted that there were 13 instances in which corrections were made as to conditions reported in November. These were:

The minimum standard of timbering was complied with in all working places.

A warning sign was removed and located properly.

Room and entry crosscuts were made at 60-foot intervals.

Stoppings built since the last federal inspection were of incombustible material.

Certain ventilation doors were installed according to recommendations.

Designated abandoned room-panel entries were sealed off in a substantial manner.

An additional examiner was employed to make the pre-shift examination of the mine.

The mine examiners placed the date of inspection at or near the face of each place examined.

A rule was established prohibiting motormen from back-poling (locomotive trolleys). No violations were observed.

The trolley-wire was guarded effectively at man-trip stations in working sections.

The power wire was removed from a designated room.

The drive belts on the pumps in the main pumping station in one area were provided with adequate guards.

Several bags of rock dust were provided at each ventilator door.

IMPEACHMENT THREAT TO GREEN IN MINE DISASTER

Legislator Says He Will Seek Ouster if Neglect of 1946 Plea of Miners Is Shown.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 27

By a Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., March 27—State Representative Carl Preihs of Pana, Ill., announced today he would seek impeachment of Gov. Dwight H. Green if it can be determined that the Governor "neglected or refused to act" on the pleadings of officers of the miners' union to correct dangerous conditions at the Central Coal Co. Mine No. 5.

Preihs said he was "awed by the apparent non-feasance in office of the Governor" and he added that Gov. Green's alleged "refusal and neglect to act to save the lives of 100 or more coal miners is the most dastardly ever committed by any state official of the State of Illinois."

The request of the officers of Local 52 of the United Mine Workers of America is printed elsewhere in the Post-Dispatch. In their letter to Gov. Green they begged him to close the mine, because they feared a disastrous dust explosion. Death toll of the explosion that occurred in the mine at Centralia last Tuesday was expected to reach 111.

Meanwhile, Gov. Green, who arose from a sick bed in Chicago where he has been confined with a cold and fever, declared he was determined to have a "full, complete, impartial and non-political investigation" of the disaster. This was the Governor's first public statement on the explosion.

"I want no whitewash," he said to reporters he received today. "I still intend to go to Centralia as soon as I can to investigate personally. I hope to go tomorrow provided my physician will permit me."

In addition to filing impeachment proceedings against the Governor if the facts warrant, Preihs, a Democrat, said, "I will use every means at my command to bring about the conviction and punishment of the Illinois Mining Commission, who so wrongfully rendered a decision in this case."

Under the Illinois constitution, the House of Representatives has the sole power of impeachment, which must receive a majority vote of all members to be successful. Impeachment proceedings are tried by the Senate and the Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court must preside when the Governor is tried.

Gov. Green, who said that on March 14, 1946, he had referred the miners' request to the director of the State Department of Mines and Minerals, will ask the Federal Coal Mines Administration, the United States Bureau of Mines, the State Department of Mines and Minerals, the Mine Operators' Association, the AFL United Mine Workers and the State's Attorney of Washington county to designate representatives to serve on the fact-finding committee to make an immediate study of the disaster.

CREWS PUSH INTO LAST GAS-FILLED PASSAGEWAY; 79 NOW KNOWN DEAD

12 More Bodies Found in Tunnels at Centralia—Gov. Green Lays Lack of Safety to U. S. Operation.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 28

By HARRY WILENSKY
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., March 28—In a final daring push into the gas-filled far reaches of the Centralia Coal Co. mine, rescue workers today sought to determine whether any of the 32 entombed miners remained alive 72 hours after the explosion which is known to have killed at least 79.

Five more bodies were brought out of the mine this morning and 27 last night. Of the total of 142 men who were in the mine at the time of the explosion Tuesday, 67 bodies lay in an improvised morgue in a garage near the mine tipple. Rescue workers said 12 other bodies had been discovered below. Only 31 men escaped alive.

If any still in the mine remained alive they were in the far end of the southern passage, the only one remaining unexplored. Through this passage, crews wearing gas masks pushed today, some three miles from the main shaft.

State Mine Inspector Driscoll Scanlan declared that 12 additional bodies definitely were accounted for in the mine. He said the searchers late today had pressed within three-quarters of a mile of the end of the south passage and should complete their work tonight or tomorrow.

Scanlan declared there was only a "slim chance" any miners would be found alive.

While the rescue work continued, Gov. Dwight H. Green of Illinois announced that after all of the men or bodies are removed from the mine it will be closed, pending an inspection by a special fact-finding board.

A year ago Centralia Coal Co. miners, including three men now identified as having died in the disaster, pleaded with Gov. Green to enforce safety regulations in the mine. Explosion hazards were not corrected and the State of Illinois did no invoke its power to close the mine in time to prevent the tragedy.

State Representative Carl Preihs of Illinois announced yesterday that he will file impeachment proceedings against Gov. Green, if it can be determined that the Governor "neglected or refused to act" on the pleadings of the miners.

Gov. Green said in Chicago yesterday that after he had turned the miners' letter, asking him to save their lives, over to the Department of Mines and Minerals, "as far as my office was concerned, that seemed to end it right there." He said "there were no other complaints and I heard nothing more about it."

He attempted to place responsibility for the disaster to the Federal Government, when asked what the state policy had been concerning the closing of unsafe mines.

"We have a situation here," he declared, "where the United States Government is the mine operator. The Government has its own inspectors. The policy of the Government has been to get out every ton of coal possible, during and since the war."

Asked about the disclosure by the Post-Dispatch that at least one mine inspector had been collecting funds from mine operators in behalf of the candidacy of Russell W. Root, Republican, known as "Gov. Green's man," for mayor of Chicago, Gov. Green replied:

"We had only one such complaint. This was called immediately to the attention of Robert M. Medill, director of the Department of Mines and Minerals. Of course that was contrary to my policy. Mr. Medill stopped it."

No Mass Funeral.

Meanwhile, Centralia and the surrounding towns began to bury their dead today. Two funerals were held this afternoon, with many more to follow.

No mass funeral is planned. At a meeting yesterday attended by clergymen, members of miners' familes and undertakers, it was recommended that a group funeral be held only in the case of unidentifiable bodies, although it was deemed expedient to hold joint services for small groups in churches and undertaking establishments.

The meeting, held at Centralia's City Hall, opened with a moment of "silent prayer for those who're down there." At these words, a woman in the audience fainted.

A fund to aid needy families of miners who lost their lives, sponsored by the Centralia Sentinel, passed the $7500 mark in two days.

Business Houses to Close.

All business houses in Centralia will close Monday in the memory of the mine disaster victims.

In addition to the 35 bodies identified yesterday, those brought from the mine and identified today included Ray O. Smith, 54 years old; Miles McCollum, 65; Arthur H. Carter, 54; Henry Knicker, 59; Alfredo Pollacci, 69; Charles McGreavey, 57; Clarence McHenry, 50; Joseph Cerutti, 36; Paul Comper, 53; Louis Grotti, 45; Jacob Schmidt, 56; Charles Oestreich, 61, and John Busse, 59—all of Centralia. Bodies of Dominick Cervi, 53, and Emmett Uhls, 49, both of Sandoval; Henry Hoeinghaus, 56, of Woodlawn; George Powell, 40, of Odin, and Eugene Erwin, 45, of Central City, also were identified.

In the mine, no scribbled notes or other evidences were found to indicate that any of the miners had had time to make any preparations to save themselves. Many of the bodies brought out last night showed evidence of a flash of fire that is believed to have swept through the dust-filled mine following the explosion. Some of the bodies were mutiliated beyond recognition excepting through previous disfigurements or by personal papers.

U.S. Inspectors Aid Rescue.

Participating in the rescue work were nine inspectors from the Federal Bureau of Mines, rushed to the scene by C. A. Herbert, supervising engineer for the Bureau at Vincennes, Ind. No clear picture of what occurred at the time of the explosion had been made available yet, however. Inspectors said they were concentrating on rescue, and would attempt to determine the cause of the disaster later.

A dust explosion, or a break in the wall between the Mine No. 5, where the miners were trapped, and a nearby abandoned mine, liberating poison gasses into the active mine, were mentioned as possibilities by the inspectors. Both events might have happened, they added. A dust explosion, they said, might well have been precipitated by a faulty blasting charge.

Whatever the source of the explosion, the slight hope that some of the men might still be alive lay in a theory that the blast forced good air to the dead end of the passage, and that the men might have barricaded themselves there, trapping the good air before it could become fouled by the poison gas. It was hoped, also, that the good air in the deadend of the passage might have cushioned the shock of the explosion.

Damage Is Uneven.

Explosion damage was not distributed evenly inside the mine, Scanlan reported. He ventured the theory that a series of explosions, detonating each other, might have occurred. Debris was piled high and supports and railroad ties splintered in places, Scanlan said.

Scanlan said there had been rumors that tapping sounds had been heard within the mine, which might have come from the trapped miners. However, he declared: "I have investigated all of these rumors thoroughly, and found absolutely nothing."

Families of the miners no longer were waiting in large groups at the mine tipple, except when word was spread that a new group of bodies was being brought to the surface. Such word reached the waiting families last night.

By 8 o'clock, crowds jammed three buildings near the mine-shaft. People sat grimly and stolidly on benches in the miners' washhouse, with the clothing of their missing relatives hanging from the rafters above them.

Conversation was spasmodic and subdued, and the strain of the long hours of waiting told on their faces. Strangers were not welcome—this was a community calamity. Unfamiliar faces were regarded with suspicion.

About 9 o'clock, the rescue crew which had been in the mine for six hours came up. Their faces were begrimed and every movement of their bodies expressed fatigue as they trudged to the washhouse.

When it became known that the bodies were ready to be brought up, the watchers stood silently and stolidly in the shadows surrounding the tipple, held back by state highway patrolmen, peering intently at the head of the mine-shaft which was framed in the hard light of electric lights strung over the yard.

In the eerie, desolate stillness, vapor poured from the shaft, billowing to the top of the tipple. The cage appeared with the body of the first man lying on a stretcher and covered with a blanket. Four men carried the body to a waiting ambulance and returned to the shaft for the cage's second trip.

New Search Party Goes In.

When the last body had been brought out of the shaft, another search party lined up to enter the mine. The men walked leaning forward to support the oxygen tanks they carried on their backs. The lights on their helmets gleamed brilliantly as they entered the cage. At 3 a.m. when they came up again, there would be further news for the waiting relatives.

As newspapers reporting the neglect of safety precautions at the mine reached Centralia, Centralia Coal Co. officials became increasingly hostile toward newspaper and radio reporters.

W. P. Young, president of Bell and Zoller Coal Co., parent organization to the Centralia Coal Co. and vice president of the Centralia firm, was accompanied by company guards and Illinois State Highway patrolmen as he walked around the mine scene. Guards threatened photographers and barred them from the washhouse used as a collecting point in the rescue.

Relatives of the entombed miners, however, sought to discover from newspaper and radio reports what was happening in the mine. They were told little by company officials. Each survivor waited with hope, or discovered the truth he had feared.

Indignation spread to other mining towns as conditions leading up to the tragedy at Centralia were revealed. At Gillespie, Ill., Local No. 1 of the Progressive Mine Workers of America, rival organization to the United Mine Workers, of which Centralia miners are members, adopted a resolution demanding a congressional investigation of the disaster and the immediate removal from office of Medill, head of the Illinois State Department of Mines and Minerals.

State action, however, appeared to hinge on the appointment of the special fact-finding board, under Gov. Green. He has asked the United Mine Workers, Secretary of Interior, Federal Bureau of Mines, Illinois Coal Operators Association, Washington County State's Attorney and the State Department of Mines and Minerals each to name one member of such a board.

State Representative Paul Powell said at Springfield today he will introduce a bill next week to replace the director of the State Department of Mines and Minerals with a three-man board.

ALL OF 111 MINERS TRAPPED AT CENTRALIA FOUND DEAD

Rescuers Rebel at State Bureau Chief's Order to Turn on Power in Gas-Filled Tunnel.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 29

By a Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., March 29—All of the 111 miners trapped in the Centralia Coal Co. mine by an explosion have been accounted for and all are dead, it was announced by rescue workers today.

None except the 31 men who escaped shortly after the blast last Tuesday survived the nation's worst mine disaster in 19 years. Last of the bodies were being removed by rescue crews today in an atmosphere of tense and sullen bitterness toward Robert M. Medill, director of the Illinois State Department of Mines and Minerals.

Medill, responsible for safety conditions not observed before the disaster, precipitated a revolt of rescue workers late yesterday by insisting that power be turned on in the mine to "speed the work." Rescue workers objected because of the danger of new explosions.

Driscoll Scanlan, state mine inspector, who had tried in vain to close the mine as unsafe, upheld the rescue workers—against his superior officer, Medill. Medill then consented to have a chemical test of the air in the mine made.

That test showed the presence of a mixture of gasses that was both deadly for men to breathe and unsafe for use of equipment producing sparks. The danger of explosion was still present, Scanlan said.

Search of the mine then was resumed, after a delay of two and a half hours. The mine rescue workers' demand that Medill be removed from all connection with the search was not heeded, although Federal Bureau of Mines officials said they would keep a close watch for further signs of "dissatisfaction."

Rescue workers today wore signs on their backs stating "100 per cent for Scanlan." Lawrence Miller of Centralia, one of the workers, said this move was to "show our contempt for Medill." Miller, a former miner now working as a railroad engineer, took a leave of absence to join the rescue crew. Decision to wear the signs, he said, was taken at a "protest meeting" of rescue workers at the mine tipple.

Miners had asked that Scanlan and federal officials be put in charge of the rescue work. To a man, the rescue workers indicated respect for Scanlan, who has scarcely slept in the 94 hours which have elapsed since the explosion occurred in the mine. He had not taken off his clothes until late yesterday. Scanlan was down in the mine again today.

Gov. Dwight H. Green of Illinois has decided too late to take action in behalf of mine safety, Local 52 of the AFL United Mine Workers of America telegraphed the Governor today.

The telegram was signed by William E. Rowekamp, recording secretary of the local. He is the only survivor among the four union officers who a year ago wrote Gov. Green pleading that safety regulations be enforced to "save our lives." The others perished in the Centralia disaster Tuesday.

The union telegram follows:

"We were told that you were coming to Centralia last Tuesday by plane, to make a personal investigation of the terrible disaster which has snuffed out the lives of almost all of the men in the mine. Now you say you are still coming to Centralia.

"Well, Governor, there are not many of us left, now, but we that are wish to take this opportunity to tell you in our own language that it is too late. Our officials pleaded with you a year ago to come to our rescue. Today their broken and seared bodies lie in the morgue.

"No, Governor, it's too late."

Exact time of the disaster, last Tuesday, was set at 3:25 p.m. A watch worn by one of the men whose body was removed early today had stopped at that hour.

Although most mine men here assume the cause of the explosion was the excessive amount of dust allowed to accumulate untreated in the mine, an authoritative decision on this question may not be arrived at for weeks, Scanlan said. It may be several days before enough good air can be induced in the mine so that a thorough inspection can be made, he said.

Searchers last night found 13 bodies, all men from Beckemeyer, Ill., lying together, in the south passage. All had their dinner pails over their arms, as if they had started to leave their entries for the main shaft and, as one rescue worker put it, "walked right into the flames." The explosion, sending a flash of flame through the mine passages, occurred just half an hour before the men were due to leave the mine and miners working in the farther passages apparently had started for the main shaft.

The far end of the south passage, about three miles from the shaft, showed evidences of fire, but slight blast damage, searchers said.

Day of Mourning Proclaimed.

A sense of profound tragedy has fallen over a wide area around Mine No. 5 here. Grieving friends and relatives of the 111 dead in the mine disaster run into the hundreds.

The mayors of Centralia and four neighboring communities have issued a joint proclamation designating Monday as "a day of mourning." All businesses and schools will close at Centralia, Central City, Wamac, Sandoval and Glenridge. The proclamation said, in part:

"Our respective communities are paralyzed by the enormity of the catastrophe; our hearts are heavy with grief. . . ."

Mass services will be held Monday for the unidentified dead in the Centralia High School gymnasium. The high school chorus will sing the requiem.

Individual services for the identified dead began yesterday and funeral corteges were a common sight on the streets of towns in this area. Services for eight miners were held today.

Harry Berger, a 54-year-old miner who had worked for the Centralia Coal Co. for 35 years, was the first man buried yesterday. His father, Joe, had been killed in a mine accident eight years ago.

The people who had known Harry Berger jammed the Garnier undertaking establishment, their eyes rimmed with the dark shadows of sleepless waiting.

They sat on the steps leading to the second floor of the establishment, formerly a private home, and stood crowded together in the entrance hallway. Dozens sat in an upstairs parlor to listen to the services, conducted by the Rev. E. B. Beaty, a Centralia Methodist minister, over a public address system.

The attending miners were dressed in suits and white shirts instead of the grimy overalls they had been wearing almost constantly since Tuesday night.

"May God be near those who are waiting," said the minister.

The friends of Harry Berger filed by his open casket for a last look at the miner's body. They gathered on the tree-lined sidewalk in front of the undertaking establishment, a vivid contrast to their recent customary gathering place in the washhouse of the mine, while the casket was loaded into a waiting hearse.

Under a blue, cloudless sky, Harry Berger was buried in a small plot in a Centralia cemetery, near an elm tree whose buds promised imminent spring.

The Bells Toll.

Church bells tolled in small towns throughout the area.

Mrs. Don Soper, whose husband was one of the miners who got out alive, joined the mourning for the dead.

"I thank God for letting my husband come back to us," she said. "We have lost four of our family—two of Don's uncles and my cousin and Don's brother-in-law.

"I just begged Don not to go back into the mine. I never wanted him to go back anytime, but that morning I was especially afraid. I prayed for him after he left."

The Sopers have three children, including twins.

Soper told how he escaped. "I was on the bottom, about 200 or 300 yards back in the engine room," he said.

"The first that I knew that anything was wrong was when a cloud of smoke billowed up. The man with me said, 'Don, I think there has been an explosion. Come on.

"We ran to the main entrance and got on the first trip up the shaft.

"Later I worked with the rescue crews. We gathered about 32 bodies Thursday night. I remember one of them sitting on a trip rider, just as if he was ready to ride out. He looked that natural.

"The passageways were blocked by rock falls. Motors were thrown all sideways and other heavy machinery wrecked."

The Sopers were attending services for their relatives today.

Contributions to a Centralia relief fund, for families of the mine disaster victims, totaled more than $10,000 today. Gifts varied from $3000 from a St. Louis concern to 23 cents, from a woman whose neighbor had lost his life in the mine.

Clothing, Tools Contributed.

Merchants have contributed clothing and tools for use by rescue workers. Food and coffee have been served by Red Cross and Salvation Army workers.

Town officials in nearby communities are organizing volunteer crews of grave diggers.

Inquiries are planned by the United States Senate and House, Gov. Green and a fact-finding commission, the Illinois Legislature and the Washington county grand jury.

Gov. Green's office announced he was still too ill with a cold and fever, threatening pneumonia, to go to the scene of the disaster.

Hugh White, Illinois president of the United Mine Workers, today appointed Oliver Bishop of Zeigler, Ill., to represent the union on the Governor's fact-finding commission. The commission is to represent mine owners and state and federal agencies as well.

The Social Security Administration prepared today to set up a temporary office at Centralia to help process death benefit claims filed by dependents of men killed in the disaster. Payments will be made either on a monthly basis on in a lump sum, depending on the choice of the beneficiaries.

STATE CAN CLOSE UNSAFE MINES, U.S. OFFICIALS SAY; OWN RIGHT IS UNCERTAIN

By a Washington Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

WASHINGTON, March 27.

THE Illinois State Department of Mines and Minerals has an unquestioned right to shut down a mine it finds unsafe, it was stated by Interior Department officials here today.

Safety inspection of coal mines is the responsibility of both federal and state agencies. Whether the Federal Bureau of Mines' safety inspectors can close unsafe mines, however, is open to question.

In normal times, such action usually is taken by the state department involved. However, it was pointed out that the mines now are under seizure by Secretary of the Interior Krug—and as head of the Centralia mine some argue he could have shut it down.

Robert M. Medill is director of the Illinois State Department of Minec and Minerals. He was appointed by Gov. Dwight H. Green in 1941. He also served in this capacity from 1920 to 1924.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 27

INSPECTORS CITED BELL & ZOLLER ON EXPLOSIVES AT TWO OTHER MINES

Violations Had Been Charged by State and Federal Officials at Shafts Firm Controls at Zeigler, Ill.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 30

By EVARTS GRAHAM Jr.
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., March 31—The Bell & Zoller Coal and Mining Co. of Chicago, which controls the Centralia Coal Co.'s Mine No. 5 here, was cited by State and Federal Mine Inspectors for improper handling of explosives at two other mines it controls in the Southern Illinois coal fields, the Post-Dispatch learned today.

Last Tuesday's explosion at the Centralia mine, which took the lives of 111 miners, may have been caused by blasting in workings choked with coal dust and inflammable gases. The exact cause of the explosion is one of the points which is to be determined by the four groups thus far named to investigate the disaster.

Robert M. Medill, director of the Illinois State Department of Mines and Minerals, had said, however, that blasting "well could have caused the explosion." On March 20, five days before the explosion, a federal inspector found that "shots were fired at the end of the shift with all the men in the mine." The explosion occurred near the end of a shift.

A reporter yesterday visited two Bell & Zoller mines at Zeigler and five other mines selected at random in Franklin and Williamson counties, reading in each case the reports of mine inspections posted on bulletin boards outside the miners' wash houses.

At Bell & Zoller Mine No. 1 at Zeigler, United States inspector H. C. Brumbaugh found during an inspection carried out from last Feb. 20 to Feb. 27 that "primed explosives were found on the floor near a working face. A workman said explosives were in this location for about two days."

Last Feb. 19 State Inspector James R. Wilson found three cap boxes stored near blasting powder at the same mine, and Cardox shells not stored in shell racks. In addition, advanced workings in one section of the mine were not being rock dusted, Wilson discovered. Rock dust should be spread on mine floors in order to hold down coal dust.

Brumbaugh also cited inadequate rock dusting, and reported that timbering was not adequate in three of the underground rooms.

At Bell & Zoller Mine No. 2 at Ziegler, Wilson discovered last Feb. 12 that "there are not any Cardox shell racks in some sections of the mine, and the Cardox shells are scattered through the mine." Otherwise, he found the workings in good condition.

The latest report by Brumbaugh posted on the board was dated last July 16. It listed about 15 violations of mine safety regulations, including rock dusting, storage of Cardox shells, timbering, unsafe electrical connections, and inadequate safety precautions on machines and equipment.

In addition, he said that electrical power was not always cut off at equipment near mine faces before explosives were taken to the faces or exploded.

A constantly recurring refrain of improper rock dusting was found in the reports posted at the other mines the reporter visited.

At the New Orient of the Chicago, Wilmington and Franklin Coal Co. at West Frankfort, the largest shaft mine in the world, Wilson reported last March 20, "behind with rock dusting in all of the advanced workings."

Wilson found dirty spots on the haulage roads, and too few trap doors and walls to deflect fresh air to sections being worked had been built. Federal Inspector W R. Chick last January found too much coal dust in the mine, inadequate rock dusting and brattices, and not enough temporary jacks and safety post supporting timbering.

Brumbaugh reported 16 violations at the mine last June. At stake at the New Orient mine, which produces 10,785 tons of coal a day, are the lives of 1199 men.

Rock dusting was not keeping up with the miners in advanced workings of Mine No. 9 of the Old Ben Coal Corp. at West Frankfort and buggy runs and loading stations were dusty, State Inspector Elmer Edmonds reported last Jan. 27.

State Inspector Ray McCluskey cited rock dusting and piles of rock in the bottom of the escapement shaft at the Lake Creek Mine of Consolidated Coal Co. Near Johnston City last March 20.

At Mine No. 1 of the Seymour Coal Co. at Herrin, McCluskey's report of dirty haulage roads, made only last Tuesday, was tacked over a long series of complaints of dirt and dust in reports made at intervals over a period of two years. In addition, there was poor ventilation in one section last Tuesday, he said, and nothing had been done to provide a pressure gauge for the fan, although it was first reported nine months ago.

The record posted on the bulletin board of Mine No. 7 of the Franklin County Coal Corp. at Royalton indicated that compliance with mine safety regulations is not impossible.

Brumbaugh made 27 recommendations in a highly critical report of the mine following an inspection in May 1945. When he returned last October, he complained only of improper timbering and rock dusting. Edmonds cited rock dusting and dirty haulage roads last March 19.

HIGHER-UPS BLOCKED MINE CLOSING, INSPECTOR SAYS; LEWIS CALLS MEN OUT FOR WEEK'S MOURNING PERIOD

SCANLAN ASSERTS PRECAUTIONS HE URGED COULD HAVE AVERTED DISASTER

Official at Centralia (Ill.) Declares Board Set Up by R. M. Medill Overruled Him When He Tried to Use Authority.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 29

By HARRY WILENSKY
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., March 29—Compliance by the Centralia Coal Co. with the safety recommendations of State Mine Inspector Driscoll Scanlan could have saved the lives of the 111 miners who died in the mine disaster, Scanlan declared today.

However, Scanlan was overruled, in his contention that the mine should be closed, by an investigating commission appointed by Robert M. Medill, director of the State Department of Mines and Minerals. Scanlan, working under that department, made repeated insistent complaints to Medill about the dangerous conditions in the mine.

"Every one of my recommendations," Scanlan said today, "could have been complied with, could have saved the company money and could have saved these men's lives."

Scanlan told the Post-Dispatch that conditions at the mine became so bad that in April 1945 he cracked down on the mine superintendent and told him that he was ready to close the mine and that he had authority under the state statutes to close it.

"I gave him the alternative of working four days a week and cleaning up the dust the other three days," Scanlon said. "The only reason I didn't close it completely at once was that I didn't want to hamper the war effort.

"The superintendent told me he would have to contact Chicago (home office of the company) before making a decision, and I said I hadn't time to wait that long. Mine superintendents ought to be big enough to make their own decisions. I said that was the trouble with the country—too many mines being run from Chicago and St. Louis.

"I said I was going out to my car right then and make out my report. When I came back, I said to the superintendent, 'Have you made up your mind?' He said he guessed the company would rather work four days a week, so that was done. They worked four days and spent the other three cleaning up.

Hazards Removed.

"They loaded hundreds of tons of dirt and rock-dust, and took down many hanging roofs. Finally, the mine resumed full capacity operation under safe operating conditions."

But the conditions at the mine remained safe "only a couple of months," Scanlan said.

George E. Bayles, safely engineer for the American Reinsurance Co. of New York, which had issued a $250,000 compensation policy to the Centralia company, said he was at the mine when Scanlan issued his ultimatum. He asserted the "mine was in very bad shape" at that time.

Scanlan's highly critical official reports to Medill started again. One report dated "Dec. 13-14, 1945," which the Post-Dispatch found still posted on a bulletin board in the miners' washroom after the disastrous explosion last Tuesday, stated:

"Coal in this mine is extremely dry, an excessive amount of dust is in suspension during the cutting and loading operations. The dust is an explosion hazard, also injurious to the health and safety of the men working around the machines."

Commission Appointed.

Following a series of reports similar to this, Medill appointed the commission to study the case. Medill said today that Scanlan's reports at Mine No. 5 were "pretty severe."

The commission "agreed there was reason for complaint about the mine," Medill said, "but took the view that, because of war conditions and the manpower shortage, the company hadn't been able to take the necessary steps. The company had begged the men to work at night or on their days off to do this corrective work."

He said commission members were Muriel Reak, representing the United Mine Workers of America; Ben Schull, representing the operators of the mine; Robert Weir, assistant director of the Department of Mines, and two other mine inspectors, Charles Blakeney and John Golden.

Workers Attacked Commission.

The commission was attacked in a letter, dated March 3, 1946, that officers of Local 52 of the UMW wrote to Gov. Dwight H. Green, pleading with him to "please save our lives" by forcing the Department of Mines to enforce safety regulations. The letter said, "the commission did not inspect all of the mine. . . . And they ignored officers of the local Union. The commission did not give us a chance to call their attention to unsafe conditions or listen to our complaints."

Operators of the Centralia mine did not contribute to the Republican campaign fund for the mayor of Chicago, Scanlan said today. This shakedown by the mines department was exposed by the Post-Dispatch recently. The reason the operators of this mine did not contribute, the inspector said, was that he refused to solicit contributions in his district—No. 13.

"I made no collections," Scanlan said, "because that would be putting myself under obligation to the mine operators, and I won't gamble with the lives of men."

Bears Out Statement.

Medill also told the Post-Dispatch that the Centralia operators had not been solicited for contributions. W. P. Young, vice president of the company, corroborated this and Scanlan's statement.

Scanlan told of a meeting held last Jan. 30 or 31 in Medill's office in Springfield at which the director told mine inspectors, he said, "We've got to raise a lot of money. The only way I can see to do this is by tapping the mine owners."

Gov. Green, a Republican, is reputedly the leader of his party in the state. At Springfield, it was said that Medill, in his direction of the mines department, "takes orders from higher-ups," presumably Gov. Green.

Records Not Available.

Employs in Medill's office told a Post-Dispatch reporter that records of violations of state laws by the Centralia company, if any, were not available. Other employes said they were kept at Centralia. In Centralia, it was said, they were all in Springfield.

James McSherry, who was succeeded by Medill as director of the department Jan. 1, 1941, said he only had routine dealings with the Centralia company. His practice was to give a warning to operators who were reluctant to comply with regulations. This usually produced results. He said it never was necessary to issue a warning to Centralia operators, because they always complied with recommendations of the inspector.

Mrs. Alfredo Pollacci (left), whose husband was a member of the trapped crew, folds her hands as she and a relative, Mrs. Sadie Pollacci, wait for news. The crush of the crowd that gathered at the mine led officials to cordon off the area to facilitate rescue operations. *Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 26*

SENATE INQUIRY IN MINE DISASTER HAS BEEN STARTED

Former Oregon Official Commissioned to Make On-the-Spot Check at Centralia.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 30

WASHINGTON, March 29.—The special subcommittee of the Senate Public Lands Committee, appointed yesterday to inquire into the Centralia mine disaster, already has started its investigation, the Post-Dispatch was informed today.

Senator Cordon (Rep.), Oregon, chairman of the subcommittee, said he had commissioned Frank Sever, a lawyer and former prosecuting official of Portland, Ore. to make an on-the-spot check at Centralia. He said Sever, who was in Washington on another matter, left here by train yesterday.

Cordon said that Sever would determine what witnesses were available and make a report to the committee. Cordon said also he wants to learn what sort of investigating commission Gov. Green of Illinois will appoint and how long it may take to make a thorough examination underground.

The subcommittee "unquestionably" will go to Centralia for hearings, Cordon said. The decision as to when to make the trip will depend on the course of events.

Other members of the subcommittee are Senators Dworshak (Rep.), Idaho and O'Mahoney (Dem.), Wyoming.

MINERS SOLIDLY SUPPORT LEWIS MOURNING ORDER

Operators' Representative Says 'Grandstand Play' Will Cost Diggers $15,000,000.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 30

WASHINGTON, March 29 (AP)—The nation's 400,000 soft coal miners today appeared ready to observe without question the six-day mourning period for the 111 victims of the Centralia (Ill.) mine disaster. Their attitude was summed up in the words, "If John L. Lewis says we're going out, we're going out."

Word of Lewis's order filtered slowly through the mine areas but UMW leaders and miners agreed they would co-operate with Lewis 100 per cent.

Dennis Akers, one of the 31 survivors of the Centralia explosion, and who has survived two previous mine explosions at Beckemeyer, Ill., said the mourning period was "51 weeks too short."

William Nolte, Nashville, Ill., a member of one of the rescue teams, said that "one day would have been enough, instead of a week." Nolte was injured in a mine explosion in 1938.

Lewis Praised By Mayor.

Mayor O. W. Wright of Centralia commended Lewis for his action.

"It's a mighty fine thing," Wright said.

George Hawley, a miner for 38 years, said the co-operative mine at Glenridge, Ill., at which he works has been closed since the explosion.

"John's a little late," Hawley said. "We've been out since Tuesday, but will go along in this new memorial. We realize the country needs coal, but we need safety."

"I don't like to lose a week's wages," said Joseph Montichak of Castle Shannon, Pa. "But if John L. Lewis says we're going out, we're going out."

Another miner swore and said: "Just when a man is getting on his feet . . ."

West Virginia's 100,000 miners were expected to follow the decree without dissent. President William Blizzard of UMW district 17 declared:

"The order will be complied with. There will be no coal mined in district 17."

At Fairmont, Vice President Cecil Urbaniak of District 31, said the "mines will stop" in the northern West Virginia field.

Similar reports came from the mining regions of Illinois, Kentucky and Alabama.

United Mine Worker President High White of Illinois commented:

"I think Mr. Lewis has done a very fine thing. The memorial will be observed by every union member in this district."

The rival Progressives Mine Workers Union said it did not plan to observe the six-day mourning period but John McCann, president of a progressives local which mines 20 per cent of the state's coal, said, "It would be a real expression of sympathy if some of our members were to observe the mourning day next Monday."

McCann said that several Progressive locals plan such a one-day observance.

John D. Battle, executive secretary of the National Bituminous Coal Association, said in a statement that "Mr. Lewis's grandstand play . . . will not bring any of those dead back to life . . . (but) wil cost the mine workers in wages upwards of $15,000,000 and the national economy as a whole double or triple that amount."

UMW LEADER ASKS 400,000 TO CEASE WORK APRIL 1 TO EASTER MORNING

Designates Period Be cause 'We Know Centralia, Ill., Sacrifice, Like Others Before, Will Be Soon Forgotten.'

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 29

WASHINGTON, March 29 (AP)—John L. Lewis today called on 400,000 soft coal miners to quit work from Tuesday, April 1, to Sunday, April 6, in memory of the 111 victims of the Centralia, Ill., disaster.

He said his Government contract authorized such a period of mourning.

Lewis noted that next week is Holy Week in Christian churches and he told his bituminous coal miners that the memorial period is appropriate.

At a press conference, Lewis repeated that "criminal negligence" on the part of Secretary of Interior J. A. Krug, who heads the coal mines administration in charge of the bituminous pits under federal operation, "is responsible for the death of these brave men and the future impoverishment of their families."

He fixed the mourning time from midnight Monday, March 31, until Easter Sunday.

Message to the Union.

In a communication to the officers and members of his union, mailed out from Washington today, Lewis said:

"During this period, coal production will cease and memorial ceremonies, church services and other exercises should be conducted to honor our dead and pray to God in His infinite mercy to provide consolation for the bereaved families."

He said it is "a sacred coincidence that the greater part of this designated period of mourning will be during 'Holy week.'"

The mine chieftain told a Senate committee yesterday that the miners killed in the Centralia disaster were "murdered because of the criminal negligence of J. A. Krug." He further testified that Krug had failed to "enforce the law, the safety code of the industry which he negotiated with this witness."

Krug declined comment when advised of Lewis's testimony.

"Forced to work by yellow dog injunction secured by Krug and his co-conspirators, the safety of these men was neglected to a point where they died like trapped animals," Lewis said at this news conference.

"Will Be Soon Forgotten."

Lewis designated the mourning period because, he said, "we know from harsh experience that it is only a momentary feeling of pity on the part of the public, and this sacrifice, like others before, will soon be forgotten."

"The American people must be aroused to the stark realities of the situation and the casualties of the coal industry," he continued.

Lewis told a news conference it is his opinion, and the opinion of the coal miners, that Krug should be "cast out of the high office he holds." He said "he (Krug) has dishonored his word," and added, "he has brutalized the mine workers."

Lewis said that the contract he signed with Krug last May 29, ending a 59-day spring strike, carried over a provision from the 1941 agreement with the soft coal operators, providing that Lewis could set times for memorial services in honor of men who died in the pits.

Anthracite coal miners are not affected by the six-day work-stoppage mourning period.

Letter From R. R. Sayers.

Lewis told reporters he had a letter from R. R. Sayers, recently removed director of the Bureau of Mines, declaring that since last July 29, when the federal mine safety code became effective, there have been 1723 inspections by the federal bureau. Sayers said the average federal inspector's report showed 27 violations per mine inspected.

Lewis said that on that basis the total number of violations between last July 29 and March 25, therefore, would be 46,521.

Lewis read provisions of the federal code and the Krug-Lewis agreement which placed responsibility for enforcement with the coal mines administration, which Krug heads.

"Mr. J. A. Krug has not in any one instance in the industry closed a mine that was unsafe or removed its manager or made any effective attempt to have the law and his own code of standards complied with," Lewis said.

In response to questioning, Lewis said neither the Government nor the soft-coal operators had made any move to reopen negotiations for restoration of the bituminous pits to their private owners. The operators are serving as operating managers for the coal mines administration but the contract covering pay and working conditions has not been accepted by those operators.

The soft-coal mines must be turned back to their owners next June 30 with expiration of the war powers act under which they were taken over by the Government.

Lewis said that although he thought Krug should be ousted, he had made no such request of President Truman yet.

UMW CHIEF STOPS DIGGING OF SOFT COAL STARTING TOMORROW NIGHT

He Again Accuses Administrator Krug of Responsibility for Blast by Reason of 'Criminal Negligence.'

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 30

By GEORGE H. HALL
A Washington Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

WASHINGTON, March 29 — John L. Lewis today ordered 400,000 bituminous coal miners out of the pits from midnight Monday to midnight the following Sunday as a protest against such "horrors" as the explosion that took the lives of 111 men at Centralia, Ill., Tuesday.

This period he designated as one of mourning. He said that all coal production would cease and recommended that memorial services be held for the dead.

He said the basic agreement of the United Mine Workers with the Government provided that the union "may designate memorial periods provided it shall give proper notice to each district." Such notices went out today. It was the first time the union has made use of the provision. Reports from district headquarters indicated full compliance.

Lewis Again Accuses Krug.

Lewis indicated he thought public concern over the disaster at the Centralia Coal Company's No. 5 mine might result in the resignation of Secretary of the Interior J. A. Krug, whom he again charged with responsibility through "criminal negligence."

Krug had no immediate comment, but associates indicated he might have something to say tomorrow.

In reply to a question as to the possibility of some union locals extending the memorial period, Lewis said the length had been stipulated and he hoped union members would comply. The miners will lose pay for the days they remain away from the mines.

Lewis said the country had ample coal on hand and that no hardship would ensue.

Normally some 12,000,000 tons of coal are mined in six working days but the memorial shutdown actually will cost far less than that. Tuesday would be a holiday anyway as the anniversary of the miners' eight-hour day. It is designated "John Mitchell Day" in some areas in honor of the man who headed the union when the eight-hour day was obtained in 1898.

The religious holidays Thursday and Friday cut down normal production. Those miners who lay off Thursday and Friday probably will also stay home Saturday, so that Wednesday probably will be the only day that a full day's production will be lost.

The bituminous mines normally produce about 2,000,000 tons of soft coal each full day of operation.

Lewis Press Conference.

Lewis announced today's action at a press conference in his timbered serie on the sixth floor of the UMW Building. There was no carnival atmosphere such as often attends the public appearances of the hedge-browed mine workers' boss.

Photographers were excluded on the order of K. C. Adams, Lewis's alter ego and public relations man. At the conclusion of the half-hour meeting, however, Lewis decided the photographers could come in and take a few pictures.

Lewis was seated behind a massive oak desk when about 20 reporters were admitted. He stared at them as they filed in, his head resting on his left hand in characteristic pose. He held a cold cigar in his fingers.

He had before him a little brown brooklet containing the federal mine safety code, many of whose articles were reported violated at the Centralia mine. He had also several papers to which he referred from time to time. He had organized his remarks to provide the climax at the end, and he spoke with decision and economy of words.

He began by reading articles from the Krug-Lewis agreement of last May 29 and from the safety code which set forth the enforcement duties of the coal mines administrator. He then read a letter from R. R. Sayers, director of the Interior Department Bureau of Mines, stating that of 3345 inspections in 1946 only two mines were found to be complying entirely with the code. Finally he read the memorial letter, which he took from a desk drawer.

Lewis shook his head for emphasis as he read the letter, causing a lock of graying hair to fall across his left temple. He raised his voice as he intoned:

"It is a sacred coincidence that the greater part of this designated period of mourning will be during 'Holy Week.' Good Friday, April 4, is observed by Christians everywhere in sorrowful meditation and prayer for the suffering and crucified Christ who died for us that we might live. During this sorrowful period it is fitting and proper that we join in these spiritual exercises."

Says Krug Should Be Fired.

Lewis removed his glasses and in reply to a question said that in his opinion Krug "has dishonored his word, brutalized the miners and should be cast out of the high office he holds."

He added that he had not asked President Truman to fire Krug.

Lewis said the following information had been given him by Sayers:

That during 1946 there were 3345 inspections made by qualified federal inspectors including inspections made before the July 29, 1946, effective date of the federal safety code.

That number of mines found to be complying entirely and were clear of all violations was two.

That the approximate average number of violations of the code per mine in government possession is 27. (This figure would not apply to reports made before July 29.)

That the total number of inspections of bituminous mines under the safety code from last July 29 to last Tuesday is 1723.

Lewis had performed some calculations on a piece of scratch paper and noted that if 3345 is multiplied by 27 it would be found there were more than 90,000 violations last year.

When he had finished with this summary he snapped that "Mr. J. A. Krug has not in any one instance in the industry closed a mine that was unsafe, removed its manager or made any effective attempt to have the code complied with his managers for violations found by his inspectors."

Reads Part of Agreement.

For the purpose of showing Krug's responsibility in the matter, Lewis read the following excerpt from the Krug-Lewis agreement of May 29, 1946:

"As soon as practicable and not later than 30 days from the date of the making of the agreement, the director of the bureau of mines after consultation with representatives of the United Mine Workers and such other persons as he deems appropriate, will issue a reasonable code of standards and rules pertaining to safety conditions and practices in the mines. The coal mines administrator will put this code into effect at the mines. Inspectors of the Federal Bureau of Mines shall make periodic investigations of the mines and report to the coal mines administrator any violations of the Federal Safety Code. In cases of violation the coal mines administrator will take appropriate action which may include disciplining or replacing the operating manager so that with all reasonable dispatch said violation will be corrected."

Then he read this excerpt from the safety code:

"A. The Coal Mines Administrator is the exclusive agency charged with the enforcement of this code and the correction of violations thereof.

"B. In special instances where a federal coal mine inspector finds that imminent and serious danger to employes in the mine exists, he shall promptly advise the operating manager or his representative at the mine, as provided in article XII, section 5B, and report by telephone to the director of the Bureau of Mines, who shall report the matter immediately to the Coal Mines Administrator. The Administrator or his representative shall take immediate action to cause all employes to be removed from the unsafe area until any imminent and serious danger is removed."

State Laws Not Enforced, He Says

Asked if the states did not have the duty of enforcing state mine regulations, Lewis rose to his feet and said that industry records show that state laws are not enforced, that the whole machinery in the state is shot through with politics. He read, by way of illustration, a telegram from UMW officials in Kentucky charging lax enforcement.

Whatever may be the result of the memorial period, Lewis concluded caustically, drumming on the desk top with his fingers, "No men will die or be injured, no eyes will be shot out; at least they will be safe while they're mourning."

He told reporters neither the soft coal operators nor the Government had moved to reopen negotiations for restoring the mines to their private owners. The operators are serving as managers for the coal mines administration of the Interior Department. The mines were taken over by the Government under the War Powers Act.

Lewis ordered the stoppage to begin on the date he had set for a strike before the supreme court stopped him.

Lewis told his press conference that the shutdown would not violate the Supreme Court order which directed him to withdraw his notice "terminating" his contract with the Government—the signal for a strike—and to issue no such notice again so long as the Government operates the mines.

Senator Ball (Rep.), Minnesota, commented that "in the present condition of the world, I think it's an extremely inappropriate memorial." He added that "it certainly demonstrates again the power of one man—if he can do it."

Representative Max Schwabe (Rep.), Missouri, a member of the House Labor Committee, said: "I think the disaster is worthy of being memorialized, but that is certainly a peculiar way of doing it. I think if those fellows produced an extra ton of coal next week, it would be a more fitting memorial."

Text of Lewis's Letter to Miners on Memorial Holiday.

The text of Lewis's letter to all United Mine Workers, calling for a week's holiday in memorial to the victims of the Centralia (Ill.) mine disaster, follows:

"Another monumental mining disaster has occurred. An explosion occurring Tuesday, March 26, in the No. 5 mine of the Centralia Coal Co., at Centralia, Ill., killed 111 mine workers.

"This is the worst disaster of its kind since 1928. The explosion and its attendant loss of life could have been prevented if the mining laws and the federal safety code had been enforced. Local union officials have frequently called attention to the dangerous and unlawful condition of this mine. State and federal inspectors, after intimate examination, have reported the dangerous condition of this mine to their superiors. The mine was being operated under the supervision of the United States Government and the agent of Government responsible for the safety of the men was J. A. Krug, secretary of the interior.

"Criminal negligence on the part of Krug is responsible for the death of these brave men and the future impoverishment of their families. Forced to work by yellow-dog injunction secured by Krug and his co-conspirators, the safety of these men was neglected to a point where they died like trapped animals.

"The widows now weep and their children have become pathetic, mournful and helpless figures. There is public sorrow at the moment, but we know from harsh experience that it is only a momentary feeling of pity on the part of the public, and this sacrifice, like others before, will soon be forgotten. Shortly after the mine workers bury their dead, the feeling of sorrow will remain only in the breasts of the loved ones who survived; and the mine workers can look forward to the next catastrophe.

"We who are privileged to speak for our dead, and for those pathetic widows and orphans, and for the future safety of our people, challenge this criminal and calloused attitude. This killing must stop. This debauched administration of mine safety must stop. It must be stopped now. The American people must be aroused to the stark realities of the situation and the casualties of the coal industry. Coal is already saturated with the blood of too many brave men and drenched with the tears of too many surviving widows and orphans.

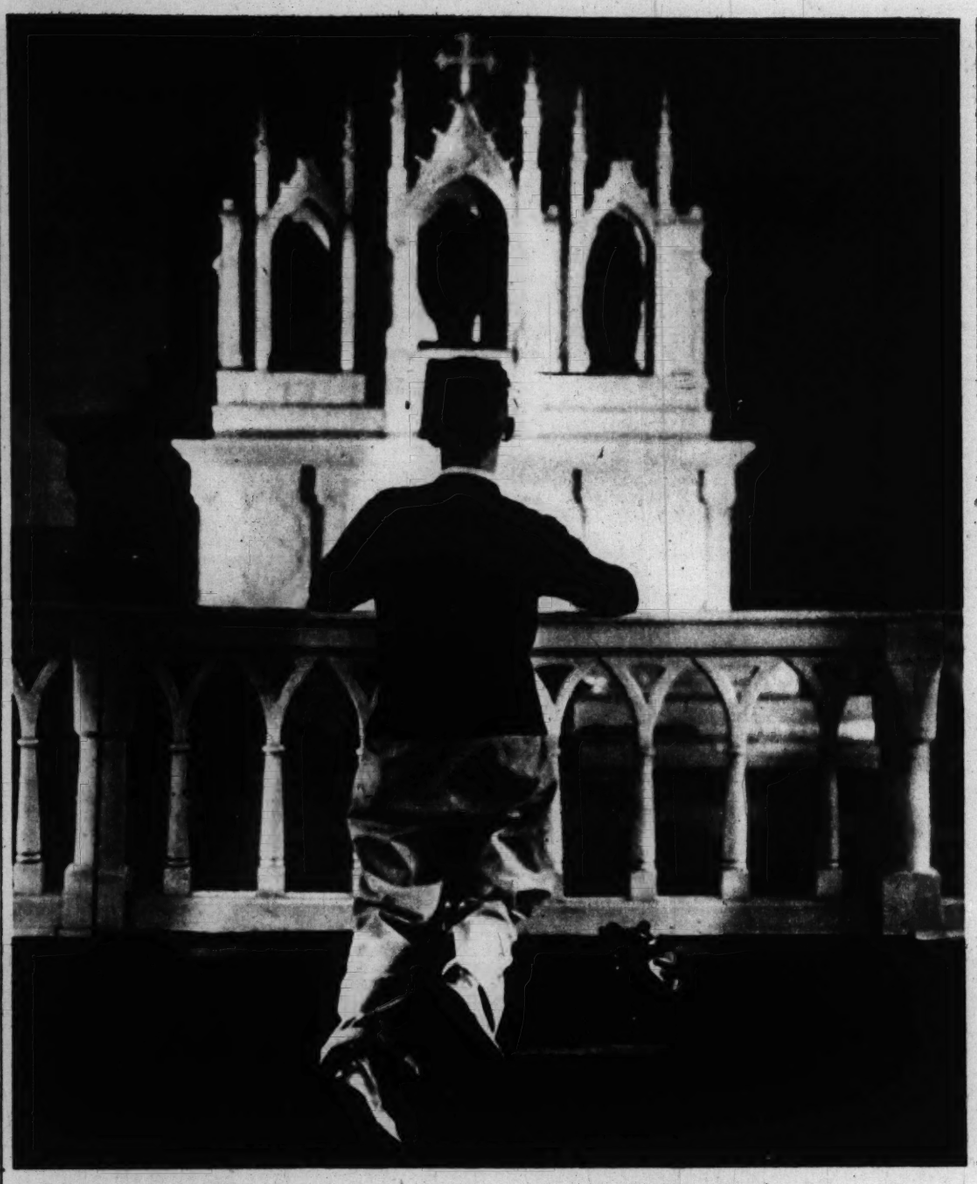
"As an effective protest against these horrors, we believe that the industry should suspend work, meditate, pray and resolve for a safer and more secure future for those working in the coal mining industry. Under the basic agreement which has been continued in full force and effect there is a provision, under safety practices, which provides as follows:

"'. . . The International Union, United Mine Workers of America, may designate memorial periods provided it shall give proper notice to each district.'

"We believe the time has arrived when such a memorial period should be made effective. We recommend, therefore, in accordance with our agreement that the designated memorial period shall begin at midnight, Monday, March 31, and end at midnight, Sunday, April 6, 1947. During this period, coal production will cease and memorial ceremonies, church services, and other exercises should be conducted to honor our dead and to pray to God in His infinite mercy to provide consolation for the bereaved families. The co-operation of the clergy and churches should be invited and accepted.

"It is a sacred coincidence that the greater part of this designated period of mourning will be during 'Holy Week.' 'Good Friday,' April 4, is observed by Christians everywhere in sorrowful meditation and prayer for the suffering and crucified Christ who died for us that we might live. During this sorrowful period it is fitting and proper that we join in these spiritual exercises.

"The mine workers are entitled to the reasonable privileges of all other citizens. They are entitled to reasonable protection of their lives as they follow their vocation. Let us hope that this period of mourning, in which all should participate, will realistically bring home to our callous Government officials and the American people the necessity for such protection in the future."



PRAYER FOR THE DEAD Simon Sease, veteran mine worker, kneeling in church at Michaels, Pa., yesterday in prayer for the 111 miners killed at Centralia, Ill. United Mine Workers Union members are observing a 6-day period of mourning set by their president, John L. Lewis.
—Associated Press Wirephoto.

ABOUT 3 OF 2000 MINES FOUND COMPLYING FULLY WITH SAFETY REGULATIONS

By EDWIN A. LAHEY

WASHINGTON, March 29.

ABOUT 2000 coal mines have been inspected in the last eight months by agents of the federal administrator, Capt. N. H. Collisson, who is charged with enforcing standards of safety established last July.

It was learned today that not more than two or three mines have been found in full compliance with the federal safety regulations.

The coal mines administrator, who is a Navy captain, is committed under the terms of the Lewis-Krug agreement of May 29, 1946, to see that these safety regulations are enforced, even if he has to discipline or remove the operating manager of a mine under federal control.

It was learned today that Capt. Collisson in his administration of the federally controlled mines had relied largely on "moral suasion" to convince operators they should meet the rigid safety standards negotiated as part of the coal peace settlement between Secretary of the Interior Krug and John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 29

STATE OFFICIAL SAYS HE WAS OVERRULED ON CLOSING MINE

Gov. Green Orders Any Shafts Violating Safety Rules to Be Barred From Reopening Tomorrow.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 30

By DONALD GRANT,
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff.

Inquiries into the Centralia (Ill.) mine disaster, in which 111 men lost their lives, yesterday were centering responsibility, for flagrantly dangerous conditions in the mine, on the owners of the Centralia Coal Co., the Illinois State Department of Mines and Minerals and on the Federal Administrator of Mines.

Developments yesterday included:

1. John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers of America, called a "holiday" of bituminous coal miners throughout the nation from April 1 to April 6, designated as a "period of mourning" for the 111 who died at Centralia.

2. Driscoll Scanlan, Illinois state mine inspector, told the Post-Dispatch that not only could his safety recommendations have been complied with, but compliance "could have saved these men's lives." He said, further, that his recommendation that the mine be closed as unsafe was overruled by an investigating commission appointed by Robert M. Medill, director of the Department of Mines and Minerals.

3. Not only had Scanlan's safety recommendations been ignored by the company, but five days before the tragic explosion, 51 out of 60 articles of the federal mine safety code found by United States Bureau of Mines inspectors to have been violated last November, still were being violated.

The Krug-Lewis agreement of last May 29, under which the Government is operating the mines, gives Federal Administrator N. H. Collisson, a Navy captain, authority to discharge the mine manager, if this is necessary to enforce safety code regulations. No such action was taken at Centralia.

4. Gov. Dwight H. Green of Illinois ordered that any "Illinois coal mines operating in violation of safety regulations" be closed for protection of the miners. He directed Medill to check with all state mine inspectors as to any mines operating without proper protection for workers, and to advise Federal coal administrators of any such finding, with the request that the mines be not permitted to open tomorrow. If the Federal officials fail to act, the state inspectors are to close the mines under authority of state law.

5. An official of Local 52, United Mine Workers, sent a telegram to Gov. Green telling him his interest in mine safety comes "too late."

The message was signed by William E. Rowekamp, the only survivor among the four union officers who a year ago wrote Gov. Green pleading that safety regulations be enforced to "save our lives." The other three men who signed that letter died in the mine disaster Tuesday.

Criticism of mine safety conditions was made in the strongest language, before the disaster, both by Scanlan and by Frank Perz, a United States Bureau of Mines inspector.

Cracked Down on Superintendent.

Scanlan told the Post-Dispatch that conditions at the mine became so bad that in April 1945 he cracked down on the mine superintendent and told him that he was ready to close the mine and that he had authority under the state statutes to close it.

"I gave him the alternative of working four days a week and cleaning up the dust the other three days," Scanlan said. "The only reason I didn't close it completely at once was that I didn't want to hamper the war effort.

"The superintendent told me he would have to contact Chicago (home office of the company) before making a decision, and I said I hadn't time to wait that long. Mine superintendents ought to be big enough to make their own decisions. I said that was the trouble with the country—too many mines being run from Chicago and St. Louis.

"I said I was going out to my car right then and make out my report. When I came back, I said to the superintendent, 'Have you made up your mind?' He said he guessed the company would rather work four days a week, so that was done. They worked four days and spent the other three cleaning up.

Hazards Removed.

"They loaded hundreds of tons of dirt and rock-dust, and took down many hanging roofs. Finally, the mine resumed full capacity operation under safe operating conditions."

But the conditions at the mine remained safe "only a couple of months," Scanlan said.

George E. Bayles, safety engineer for the American Reinsurance Co. of New York, which had issued a $250,000 compensation policy to the Centralia company, said he was at the mine when Scanlan issued his ultimatum. He asserted the "mine was in very bad shape" at that time.

Scanlan reported to Medill that hazardous conditions prevailed in the mine, once more, and after a series of such reports Medill appointed a commission to study the situation. Medill said today Scanlan's reports were "pretty severe."

The commission, which included Robert Weir, assistant director of the Department of Mines and a former officer of the Centralia Coal Co., failed to close the mine. Medill said the commission decided that "because of war conditions and the manpower shortage the company hadn't been able to take the necessary steps. The company had begged the men to work at night or on their days off to do this corrective work."

Miners' Complaint.

The commission was criticized in the miners' letter to Gov. Green. Miners said the commission was led around by the mine superintendent and failed to listen to the complaints of the men working in the mine.

Operators of the Centralia mine did not contribute to the Republican campaign fund for the Mayor of Chicago, Scanlan said today. This shakedown by the mines department was exposed by the Post-Dispatch recently. The reason the operators of this mine did not contribute, the inspector said, was that he refused to solicit contributions in his district—No. 13.

"I made no collections," Scanlan said, "because that would be putting myself under obligation to the mine operators, and I won't gamble with the lives of men."

'Tapping the Mine Owners.'

Scanlan told of a meeting held last Jan. 30 or 31 in Medill's office in Springfield at which the director told mine inspectors, he said, "We've got to raise a lot of money. The only way I can see to do this is by tapping the mine owners."

Gov. Green, a Republican, is reputedly the leader of his party in the state. At Springfield, it was said that Medill, in his direction of the mines department, "takes orders from higher-ups," presumably Gov. Green.

Medill was asked by the Post-Dispatch if this were true.

"Gov. Green is the boss," he said. "Theoretically, I suppose he can overrule me on anything concerning this department. Of course if we disagreed about mine safety questions a commission would be appointed, I suppose." He declined to elaborate.

The report on safety conditions in the Centralia mine made by Perz, the Bureau of Mines inspector, was based on two inspections. One of these was made from Nov. 4 to 6 and the latest from March 17 to 20.

He told of clouds of coal-dust in the mine and of unsafe blasting methods used—a possible invitation for an explosion. These conditions prevailed last November, Perz said, and also a few days before the explosion occurred which took the greatest toll of lives of any American mine disaster in 19 years.

The power of the Federal Administrator of Mines to enforce the safety code regulations was made clear in Washington by the text of the Krug-Lewis agreement. It states, in part:

"In cases of violation (of the safety code) the coal mines administrator will take appropriate action which may include disciplining or replacing the operating manager so that with all reasonable dispatch said violations will be corrected."

At Centralia, however, miners and rescue workers removing the last of the bodies from the pit seemed less aware of the responsibility of Federal Administrator Collisson than of Gov. Green and his director of the State Department of Mines, Medill.

The telegram sent yesterday to Gov. Green by the local miners' union stated:

"We were told that you were coming to Centralia last Tuesday by plane, to make a personal investigation of the terrible disaster which has snuffed out the lives of almost all of the men in the mine. Now you say you are still coming to Centralia.

"Well, Governor, there are not many of us left, now, but we that are wish to take this opportunity to tell you in our own language that it is too late. Our officials pleaded with you a year ago to come to our rescue. Today their broken and seared bodies lie in the morgue.

"No, Governor, it's too late."

Illinois State Representative Carl H. Preihs, who earlier had announced he intended to start impeachment proceedings against Gov. Green if it can be determined that the Governor "neglected or refused to act" on the pleadings of the miners, was in Centralia yesterday making a personal investigation.

Medill precipitated a revolt of rescue workers Friday by insisting that power be turned on in the mine to "speed the work." Workers objected because of the danger of new explosions.

Scanlan upheld the rescue workers—against his superior officer Medill, and chemical tests were made of the air in the mine. Tests showed the presence of a mixture of gasses both deadly for men to breathe and unsafe for the use of mechanical equipment which might produce sparks. The danger of explosion was still present.

Yesterday rescue workers wore signs on their backs stating: "100 per cent for Scanlan." They said this was to "show contempt for Medill." Mechanical equipment was not being used in the mine.

Some of the workers demanded, after an informal "protest meeting," that Medill be removed from all connection with the final "rescue work," which consisted yesterday of removing bodies. This demand was not heeded, although federal inspectors said they would consider such action if more dissatisfaction developed.

A United States Senate subcommittee of the Public Lands Committee began its investigation of the Centralia disaster yesterday. The sub-committee is expected to move to Centralia for hearings later this week.

Other inquiries are planned by the United States House of Representatives, Gov. Green and a fact-finding commission, the Illinois Legislature and the Washington county (Ill.) grand jury.

State Attorney Wilbert J. Holt of Washington county yesterday was at the mine tipple and said he planned to go into the mine as soon as possible to begin gathering evidence for presentation to the grand jury, which meets April 14.

"If necessary," he said, "I intend to take the grand jury itself into the mine, to seek evidence of criminal negligence."

Holt is a member of the fact-finding board named by Gov. Green to investigate the Centralia disaster, beginning Tuesday. The other members are Supreme Court Justice Charles W. Thompson of Harrisburg; Olive Bishop, Zeigler, AFL United Mine Workers' representative; David H. Devonald, Chicago, vice-president of Peabody Coal Co.; James Sneddon, Royalton, representing state Department of Mines; John E. Jones of Benton, and W. A. Gallagher of Vincennes, Ind., representing United States Bureau of Mines.

Krug Promises Report on Safety In All of U. S. Soft Coal Mines

By a Washington Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

WASHINGTON, March 31.

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR KRUG issued the following statement today in connection with the Centralia (Ill.) mine disaster:

"The tragic explosion at Centralia Mine No. 5 has claimed 111 victims, leaving their bereaved families without their support.

"My sympathy for them is too profound to permit me to debate or to gloss over their misery by engaging in any press controversy over the catastrophe or its causes.

"The facts will be known only upon the completion of the several investigations of the disaster now under way by the special Senate committee, by the special board appointed by the Governor of Illinois, and by the Bureau of Mines of the Department of the Interior.

"As soon as possible I shall transmit to Chairman Guy Cordon of the Senate committee a report on the over-all safety conditions in American soft coal mines and, so far as they are now known, in the Centralia mine."

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 31

13,000 MINERS JUMP GUN IN W. VIRIGNIA, HALT WORK

U.S. Is Not Expected to Act Against Lewis for Ordering 6-Day Mourning Stoppage.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 31

WASHINGTON, March 31 (AP) —About 13,000 West Virginia soft coal miners have jumped the gun on the six-day mourning period ordered by John L. Lewis to begin at midnight tonight, the Solid Fuels Administration reported today.

Incomplete reports this afternoon from other bituminous mining areas indicated that production was normal or nearly normal, the SFA said. No steps had been taken by the Government to intervene in the walkout of the 400,000 soft coal miners called by Lewis in memory of the 111 victims of the Centralia (Ill.) disaster.

While the mines are idle, Lewis told reporters in announcing his action, "there will be no men die; at least they will be safe while they're mourning."

Lewis insisted that his contract with the Government, which carried over provisions from preceding agreements with the bituminous operators, authorized such memorial holidays.

But even if any legal question arose in the minds of federal officials, it appeared doubtful that they planned any immediate repetition of the court fight last fall which resulted in contempt fines for Lewis and the United Mine Workers.

Lewis is due to pay that fine Thursday in United States District Judge T. Alan Goldsborough's court. If the jurist decides that the Holy Week idle period ordered by Lewis does not alter his compliance with the Supreme Court's order in the contempt case, the UMW will get back $2,800,000 of its $3,500,000 fine. The Supreme Court said a penalty of $700,000 against the union would be adequate for ignoring Goldsborough's restraining order last Nov. 21 and closing the mines. Lewis's personal fine of $10,000 was allowed to remain.

Goldsborough would not comment when a reporter asked whether he himself might summon Lewis to explain the new stoppage.

Attorney General Clark and Assistant John F. Sonnett, who conducted the injunction suit against Lewis and his striking miners, said they wanted to study the new situation further. But other officials indicated there was no inclination to punish Lewis, if they could, for this week's idleness.

Actually, while a shutdown of the bituminous pits for five working days ordinarily would mean the loss of about 10,000,000 tons of coal, much idleness would have occurred anyway this week. Tuesday is a contract holiday as the anniversary of the eight-hour day. Thursday and Friday are church holy days when absenteeism always cuts heavily into production. Saturday seldom yields more than 50 per cent of normal daily output.

INSPECTOR BLAMES MEDILL, SAYS HE 'TOOK CHANCE'; ILLINOIS MINERS WON'T WORK TILL MINES ARE SAFE

SCANLAN ASSERTS DIRECTOR ORDERED $25,000 LUG ON COAL OPERATORS

Quotes Illinois Official as Declaring That Gov. Green Was 'Satisfied and 'Money Is Rolling In.'

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 31

By HARRY WILENSKY
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., March 31—A slashing and bitter attack on Robert M. Medill, director of the Illinois State Department of Mines and Minerals, was made today by State Mine Inspector Driscoll Scanlan, who declared he had begged Medill to close the Centralia Coal Co. Mine No. 5, where 111 men lost their lives last week, predicting a dust explosion that would "sweep from one end of the mine to the other."

"We'll just have to take that chance," Medill was quoted by Scanlan as replying.

Asked why Medill refused to close the mine to prevent the greatest mine disaster in the nation in 19 years Scanlan said, "It probably was due to favoritism to the coal operator." Medill, he said, was known as an "operators' man."

Medill was more interested in collecting political campaign contributions from mine owners than he was in enforcing mine safety rules, Scanlan said.

Medill was quoted by Scanlan as telling the mine inspectors that Gov. Dwight H. Green of Illinois was "satisfied" with the collection efforts, and that "the money is rolling in."

Mine inspectors, as the Post-Dispatch revealed March 19, were used to solicit from mine operators funds for the Republican mayoral campaign in Chicago. Details of that collection effort were revealed by Scanlan today.

In Chicago the Post-Dispatch learned that Medill solicited funds from the large coal operators himself, at the express order of Gov. Green. The Governor, it was reported, called in his department heads and gave them instructions for collecting political campaign funds.

Medill was reported to have visited the nine large coal firms with headquarters in Chicago. Each firm, it was reported, was expected to give $1000.

"I considered this nothing more than asking for a bribe or extortion," Scanlan declared with heat. He said he had refused to participate in the political collection.

"I refused to play politics with the lives of the coal miners," he asserted.

For this, and for his efforts to enforce safety regulations Scanlan said he was berated by Medill for being "too honest," and he felt his job was in danger.

"If we inspectors were on a real civil service," Scanlan declared, "I'd have closed that mine half a dozen times. Or put it this way—the first time I would have kept it closed. They'd have known I meant business."

"Who, in your oponion, is responsible for the death of these miners?" Scanlan was asked.

"The operators of the mine," he replied, "and the State Mining Board, including Director Medill and his assistant, Robert Weir." (The Mining Board is under the Department of Mines; Medill is a member of the board, but is director of the department, and Weir is his assistant.)

Interference with mine safety work by Medill did not cease when the explosion last Tuesday ended the lives of the 111 men working in the mine—as had been predicted—Scanlan said.

Medill's handling of the rescue work delayed recovery of the bodies by "at least 48 hours," he said. Not only did Medill's handling of the work precipitate a revolt of rescue workers, who felt their lives were endangered by the state mine department head's orders, but Medill was in opposition there to Federal Bureau of Mines inspectors, Scanlan said.

Scanlan also charged there was a delay in starting a sufficient number of rescue teams to the site of the mine disaster. William Williams, mine rescue superintendent at Springfield for the Department of Mines and Minerals, telephoned Scanlan's wife an hour and a half after the explosion, Scanlan said, and suggested she drive to the scene "to see if the teams really were needed."

Williams later denied this. He said he "couldn't recall" the telephone conversation with Mrs. Scanlan.

Scanlan was bitter about the move to use mine inspectors as political campaign fund collection agents. At a meeting in Medill's office last Jan. 31, he said, Medill declared a "quota" of $25,000 had been set "by the boys" for the Department of Mines and Minerals.

Later, last March 7, he said Medill called another meeting of mine inspectors, at Springfield.

"Medill said the Chicago newspapers had been calling him about solicitations," Scanlan said. "He added that anything this big couldn't be pulled off without publicity.

"Medill told us not to worry about it. He said as long as 'the boss' was satisfied, we had no worries. By 'the boss' he said he meant Gov. Green."

Scanlan quoted Medill as stating he had told the Chicago newspapers he "hadn't heard a thing about the campaign collections himself, but would call in his inspectors and ask them about it." There was a good deal of laughter among the inspectors at this, Scanlan said.

Medill also told the inspectors, Scanlan said, that he "had some newspapermen all taken care of."

At the earlier meeting of inspectors, when the department "quota" was announced, Scanlan reported "Medill said he himself would take care of the major companies. He said he already had called on four of these firms and that 'two have come through with $1000 each.'"

This account of Medill's personal activities in connection with the collection was verified by a Post-Dispatch reporter in Chicago.

"Medill said one of the firms which contributed," Scanlan continued, "was the Peabody Coal Co., which operates a group of mines in Illinois and has its headquarters in Chicago."

The 1945 report on the Peabody Coal Co. Mine No. 18 at West Frankfort, Ill., in the Springfield office of the Department of Mines and Minerals, shows that four men were killed there in mine accidents. During the same year 69 men were injured in the mine. R. M. McPhail is superintendent of the mine; H. C. Harris is local mine manager and James R. Mitchell is state inspector for the district.

The Post-Dispatch revealed March 19 that Louis F. Lumaghi Jr. of St. Louis, who operates a mine near Collinsville, had been solicited for political funds by an Illinois mine inspector, R. R. Schiber. Lumaghi refused to contribute, writing Medill a sharp protest.

The St. Louis coal operator pointed out in a letter to Medill that "the state mine inspectors in Illinois are entrusted with the duty of enforcing the mining laws to protect the lives of the men who work in the mines. Under these circumstances we do not consider it proper for them to solicit contributions from companies whose mines they inspect. . ."

Inspectors Got Small Firms

While Medill made political fund collections from the large mine owners, Scanlan said the inspectors were to solicit the small, independent companies.

"My first reaction," he said, "was to quit. However, I happened to know that Gov. Green was out of the state and it was possible he might not know what was going on, so I figured on staying to see what happened.

Later, however, Medill reported to the inspectors that he had discussed the matter with Mark Saunders, one of Gov. Green's aids. It was then Scanlan said, that Medill reported that Gov. Green was satisfied.

"I want to tell you boys you are doing a good job," Scanlan quoted Medill as telling the inspectors. "The money is rolling in."

Several of the inspectors shared Scanlan's resentment at being used as political collection agents, he said.

"I told Medill that one mine at Centralia, the Marion County Coal and Mining Corp., a co-operative mine, had had a lot of hard luck and couldn't afford to contribute," Scanlan said.

"Medill asked me how many men worked at the mine. I told him about 145 or 150. He said, 'Good. Go out there and tell 'em to give you $1 apiece.' He also said we could get $50 each from the mine managers and superintendents, in addition to the contributions by the firms.

"Medill said he would contact the Bell & Zoller Coal and Mining Co., connected with the Centralia Coal Co. mine, although he would have preferred that I do it."

In praising the collection efforts, Scanlan said Medill announced that "John E. Jones, safety engineer for the Old Ben Coal Co., had sent in his personal check for $50."

Losing Fight for Safety.

While Medill was concentrating his efforts on collecting political funds, Scanlan said he tried to enforce safety regulations. It had been a losing effort for some time, he said.

March 14, 1945, he said, "I became so agitated over conditions in the Centralia Coal Co. Mine No. 5 that I made a special trip to Belleville to see Medill, there attending a safety meeting.

"His hotel room was full of mine operators when I got there, but I waited around until they left. Medill already knew how bad things were at the Centralia mine, from my previous reports, but I wanted to tell him in person.

"I told him this mine was in such a dusty and dirty condition, and insufficiently rock dusted, to keep the coal dust down, that if the coal dust was ignited an explosion would sweep from one end of the mine to the other, and that every man in the mine would be killed."

It was then that Medill told Scanlan that they would have to "take that chance," Scanlan said.

"I begged him to let me shut down that mine," Scanlan said. "And later I took it upon myself, without Medill's permission, to order a partial shutdown, so the mine would operate four days a week and the other three days would be spent cleaning up.

"I knew I was risking my job, but I got by with that because for some reason the company didn't complain. If the company doesn't complain they don't appoint a commission to overrule you."

Scanlan said he doubted if Medill ever discovered that the Centralia Coal Co. mine had been ordered closed three days a week for three or four weeks.

Asked what Medill said when Scanlan urged him to close the Centralia mine, Scanlan said:

"He said he would take it up with Mr. Young (W. P. Young, vice president of Centralia Coal Co., president of the associated Bell & Zoller Mining Co.)

"Mr. Young promised he would clean the mine up 'in the near future,' but they did not clean it up."

'Just Too Damned Honest.'

All the years he served under Medill, Scanlan said he was "in trouble with Medill from time to time. He told me several times that I had a lot of ability and could go places in the coal industry, but I was 'just too damned honest'."

Scanlan also said: "Medill called me to his office in Springfield March 13, 1946. I'm satisfied it was his intention to fire me. After giving me quite a lecture, he told me he wanted me to cut down the size of my reports.

"He said that 'those damned hunks at the Centralia mine wouldn't know the conditions of the mine if I (Scanlan) didn't bring them to their attention. When I left he told me: 'I think you understand now what kind of reports I want to come in here'."

When rescue operations were in progress last week at the mine, Scanlan said he had started crews working on eight-hour shifts.

"Then Medill came in and ordered shifts cut to five hours," he said. "This meant that there was a lot of time lost between shifts. More time was lost because Medill and his men from Springfield kept arguing with the rescue crews about conditions in the mine. Medill didn't know anything about it.

"He was lost, half the time, looking at the mine map. But he made rescue crews come up every five hours and confer with him.

"Then the Federal Bureau of Mines inspectors raised hell and Medill consented to have the crews work six-hour shifts."

By staying in the mine with his crew for seven hours, Scanlan said he managed to find 15 bodies, put up four temporary walls sealing off parts of the mine already inspected, and do preliminary work enabling the next shift to find 15 more bodies. For this, he said, he was called in and reprimanded by Medill.

Scanlan said he wanted to talk to a Post-Dispatch reporter about Medill's record as head of the department while the rescue work was in progress.

"I didn't dare, however," Scanlan said. "I was afraid he would pull me off the rescue job."

Lays Delay to Medill.

Scanlan declared that "if Medill and his department heads had not interfered with the rescue work we could have recovered those bodies at least 48 hours sooner," He said, however, that none probably could have been saved alive, expressing the opinion that "those men died between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tuesday." The explosion occurred just before 3:30 p.m., Tuesday.

Scanlan, blaming the disaster itself on "politics" and public indifference, declared that rescue work further was hampered by "two representatives of Mr. Krug" (Secretary of the Interior Krug, under whose department the mines are operating). One of these representatives, he said, was Jones—whom Scanlan also had said contributed to Gov. Green's political fund.

The two men from Krug's office, Scanlan said, were involved with Medill in the attempt to turn on the power machinery in the mine during rescue work. When Scanlan objected and the rescue workers refused to go into the mine if power machinery were used tests were made of the air in the mine and an explosive mixture was found to be present, which he said might have been ignited by sparks from the machines. All of this, he said, caused a delay of three or four hours.

Scanlan, 43 years old, son of a mine foreman and a man whose mine experience began at the age of 16, has been a state mine inspector since 1941. He made his statement to a Post-Dispatch reporter while resting at his modest frame cottage near the waterworks at Nashville, Ill., where he lives on a salary of $3300 a year. He had taken a leading part in the rescue work at Mine No. 5 and is idolized by the miners there.

At a press conference today Scanlan repeated to other newspapermen some of the things he had told the Post-Dispatch reporter previously. He criticised the political setup of the whole Department of Mines and Minerals, and of the lack of civil service status for inspectors—and rescue squad members—in particular.

Earlier he had told the Post-Dispatch reporter this newspaper "deserves credit for having exposed political contributions of mine owners without waiting for the disaster."

He said, however, that most newspapers and radio stations had begun reporting conditions in the mines only after the Centralia disaster had occurred. "If they had done it before," he said "this disaster probably could have been prevented."

Rescue Squads Are Volunteers.

Scanlan pointed out that rescue squads are volunteers, not full-time employes. It is difficult to round them up in cases of emergency he said, and when they are called at a mine they are paid by the mine, not the state. He advocated that they be made full-time employes.

"Some mine operators," Scanlan said, "put dollars ahead of the miners' lives. Some operators, however, do a good job and there are a lot of good superintendents, who do their best to take care of the miners."

Since he was so critical of so many persons involved in the Centralia disaster, Scanlan said he wanted to praise those who deserved praise.

"I want to praise the honest and qualified state inspectors — and there are a number of such men. I want to say that I had complete and excellent co-operation from every Federal Bureau of Mines inspector who assisted in this disaster.

"Every mine rescue team which worked on this job deserves the highest praise, including the Bell & Zoller team from Zeigler. John Lyons, Bell & Zoller safety engineer is a fine man who did a good job. The utmost praise goes to the Navy boys (operating under the Department of Interior), for the Army men from Scott Field, the Salvation Army, churches and the Red Cross."

Gov. Green Saturday night ordered all mines in Illinois "operating in violation of safety regulations" to be closed immediately. Green said he had ordered Medill to "conduct a survey" to see what mines should be closed under the order.

'Have to Take That Chance'

—By a Post-Dispatch Staff Photographer.

ROBERT M. MEDILL, director of the Illinois State Department of Mines and Minerals. Driscoll Scanlan, state mine inspector, told the Post-Dispatch that Medill replied to his prediction of a dust explosion at the Centralia Coal Co. Mine No. 5 and a request to close the mine by saying: "We'll just have to take that chance."

'BLACK MONDAY' IN MINE AREA AS TOWNS MOURN FOR 111 DEAD IN BLAST

Funeral Processions Follow One Another Through the Streets and Church Bells Toll Almost Continuously.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 31

By a Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., March 31—Illinois coal miners took matters into their own hands today, in the effort to prevent further disasters such as the blast in Mine No. 5, which took 111 lives last Tuesday afternoon. Hugh White, president of District 12 of the United Mine Workers, said here today that Illinois soft coal miners in the UMW would not return to work until the mines in which they are employed are reported completely safe.

"Any violation of mine safety regulations could have caused this explosion," White said. "We are not going to wait for two or three things to be wrong. The miners won't go back until everything is all right."

Peabody Closes No. 18 Mine.

The first mine to be closed was No. 18 of the Peabody Coal Co. at West Frankfort. The company's superintendent at the mine, Robert McPhail, said today that the mine had been closed permanently, effective immediately, and that the 500 miners had been so notified. McPhail said the decision was due to the fact that "the property has for a long time been an uneconomical operation." He said some miners would be employed to remove the machinery, a 30-day to 60-day job.

Four men were killed in mine accidents in Mine No. 18 in 1945 and 69 were injured in that year.

Today was a day of mourning for Centralia and the four adjoining towns where the victims of the worst mine disaster in 19 years had their homes. Townspeople who shared the grief of the stricken families attended two general memorial services, a community gathering in the High School and a requiem high mass in St. Mary's Catholic Church.

Here and in Wamac, Central City, Sandoval and Glen Ridge funeral processions followed one another through the streets, and church bells tolled almost continuously. All but the most essential places of business in all the communities were closed. Mayor O. W. Wright termed the day "Black Monday."

Memorial Services.

The memorial services, sponsored by the Centralia Ministerial Alliance, at the high school began promptly at 11 a.m. About 500 relatives and friends of the dead miners listened to 11 clergymen, 10 of whom were of Protestant denominations and one of whom was a Catholic priest.

The Rev. Arthur Schmidt, pastor of the Lutheran Redeemer Church, presided. A chorus of 50 boys and girls of the Centralia High School sang hymns. The services lasted one hour.

Not many children were in the church. One young boy was heard sobbing. Many persons, as they emerged in the gray noon weather, were seen wiping their eyes.

Among places of business that stayed open until noon were drug stores, groceries and cleaners. "The cleaners," one miner said grimly, "had to stay open so miners who wanted to mourn could get their good clothes cleaned fast."

A smaller crowd attended the special services at St. Mary's Church. There, as at the high school services, it was explained that the crowds would have been much larger but for the fact that many mourners were attending private funerals.

The fund for needy families of the mine victims was $12,150 from all sources, the Mayor said.

The investigating commission named by Gov. Dwight H. Green is to meet in Centralia's City Hall at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

After the body of the last victim was taken from the mine yesterday morning, the mine was closed. Fresh air is being pumped into the shaft continuously.

The litter of 4½ days was swept out of the miners' wash houses yesterday. The Red Cross and the Salvation Army closed the canteens where they had dispensed food and drink since a short time after the explosion, and the big shed was closed. Baskets of work clothing hung from hooks in the rafters, but the baskets of the 111 men who died in their working garments were empty.

Sleeping cars, in which rescue crews had slept between shifts, were pulled away from the siding on which they had been standing near the mine tipple. Instead of the thousands of persons about the mine during the search, there were only six around the tipple at 7:30 o'clock last night. They were a miner, a hoisting engineer, a state highway patrolman and three sight-seers.

William E. Rowekamp, recording secretary of the Centralia local of the United Mine Workers, who is one of the 31 survivors of the disaster, today spoke in approval of the order of John L. Lewis for a week's stoppage of mining.

"It is a good idea," Rowekamp said. "I hope it will call to the attention of the public the appalling conditions under which coal miners must work."

In addition to the inquiry to be begun tomorrow by the Governor's investigating commission, of which Illinois Supreme Court Justice Charles Thompson of Harrisburg is a member, inquiries are pending by committees of the United States Senate and the Illinois Legislature, and by the Washington county grand jury.

While the mourning period proclaimed by John L. Lewis does not begin until midnight tonight, local miners' unions throughout Illinois had called for a work stoppage and mourning period today, before Lewis's announcement was made. Thus it happened that, according to an announcement made by the Illinois Coal Operators' Association at its headquarters in Chicago, about 60 per cent of the state's coal mines were idle today. The 60 per cent figure is believed to be an underestimate, as the Progressive Coal Miners are observing this one day by cessation of work in respect for the dead.

The mines named by the operators as being closed today are:

Peabody Coal Co., Mine 47 at Harco; same company's three mines at Taylorville.

Consolidated Coal Co., Lake Creek Mine at Johnson City; same company, mine at Nason.

Chicago, Wilmington & Franklin Co., Mine No. 2 at West Frankfort.

Bell & Zoller Mining Co., two mines at Zeigler.

Franklin County Coal Co., two mines.

Old Ben Coal Co., three mines in Franklin county.

Seymour Mining Co., mine in Franklin county.

Valier Coal Co., mine in Franklin county.

Freeman Coal Miping Co., mine in Williamson county.

In addition, the Chicago office was informed, about one-half the men of the Union Colliery Mining Co. mine at Dowell near DuQuoin were out.

Also reported idle was the United States Coal Co. Bunsenville mine, near Georgetown.

LAST OF 111 MINERS' BODIES FOUND, ARE BEING REMOVED

MEDILL DENIES SOME OF CHARGES MADE BY SCANLAN

Asserts He Doesn't Recall Warning Inspector Said He Gave at Belleville Meeting.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 31

By a Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., March 31 — Robert M. Medill, director of the Illinois State Department of Mines and Minerals, today denied some of the charges leveled against him by State Mine Inspector Driscoll Scanlan, in connection with the Centralia mine disaster, and declared that Scanlan could have closed the mine himself.

"Just remember this," Medill said, "Scanlan has the power under the law to shut any mine down that he deems hazardous—without consulting me or anyone else."

Asked about the incident reported by Scanlan, when Scanlan said he visited Medill at Belleville to plead that the Centralia Coal Co. Mine No. 5 be closed, Medill said he couldn't remember that conversation.

"I remember attending a safety meeting at Belleville," Medill said, "and I recall Scanlan being there. I don't remember what was said, however."

"Outright Lying," Medill Says.

Medill denied flatly that, as reported by Scanlan, he had said "those damned hunks at the Centralia mine wouldn't know the conditions of the mine" if Scanlan didn't bring it to their attention.

"Scanlan was outright lying when he made that statement," Medill said. "I didn't call any miner in that mine in Illinois or anywhere else a 'damned hunk.'"

Medill added, however, that "I did say the probabilities are there are a lot of men in that mine who can't read English and they would naturally become frightened at Scanlan's reports."

The Department of Mines director, commenting on Scanlan's statement that Medill had demanded that he (Scanlan) reduce the size of his reports, said: "I called him and said, 'Driscoll, you could say everything you wanted to say regarding conditions at that mine in a good deal less space.'"

Practice to Consult Him.

In an interview before Scanlan had made his public statement, Medill had stated that, although state mine inspectors theoretically have the power to close unsafe mines, it was the practice in his department for inspectors to consult with him before they acted.

"They prefer to have my support," he said.

Medill said he called a conference of his inspectors shortly after he took office, in 1941. "I told them," he said, "to close the mines if they had to, but to try to iron out their difficulties with the operators first."

"Can you appoint inspectors without conferring with Gov. Dwight H. Green of Illinois? Medill was asked.

"What would you do?" he asked in reply. "He's the boss."

Mayors of Centralia and Surrounding Towns Proclaim a Day of Mourning.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch

By HARRY WILENSKY
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., March 29.—Double crews of workers went down into the dangerous gas-swept passages of the Centralia Coal Company's mine No. 5 tonight to begin the task of cleaning up some of the debris left by last Tuesday's explosion that took the lives of 111 men trapped in the workings.

Meanwhile, other workmen were busy bringing the bodies of the last group of 17 trapped miners to the surface. This group, found late today, were in the far reaches of the south passage. Mine Inspector Driscoll Scanlan said removal of the bodies would not be completed until sometime tomorrow.

Officials of the State Department of Mines and Minerals said records showed that the blast at mine No. 5 took the heaviest toll of lives of any mine disaster in Illinois since a similar explosion at Cherry Nov. 13, 1909, in which 259 were killed.

The only body not yet reached by the rescue crews was that of Clifford Copple, which lay on the other side of a huge pile of debris.

Scanlon, who has been working with the rescue crews in the mine for the last four days, said Copple was working with John Lorenzine, one of the 31 men who escaped following the blast. Lorenzine escaped by ripping off his shirt, soaking it in a pail of water and holding it against his nose for protection against the deadly fumes as he ran for the main shaft.

Copple, Scanlan learned, ran the other way, apparently in search of his brother, Frank, who was in another section of the mine. Frank's body has been recovered.

The announcement that all the bodies had been found came to the surface from a communication tube into which a rescue squad boss shouted: "General search completed—all bodies recovered but one." A few moments later, William P. Young, vice president of the company, told reporters, "all found, all dead."

Only a handful of survivors were nearby when the announcement came. One or two women, whose hope apparently had been shattered, touched handkerchiefs to their eyes and turned away. A hush seemed to fall over the mine entrance. Shortly, the people there started to drift away by ones and twos. And the center of attraction for the last four tiresome days took on an air of emptiness, the entrance yawning darkly.

Twelve funeral services were held today, 11 more are scheduled for tomorrow and 13 for Monday. These services include double services for two sets of brothers who perished in the mine and another double service for Martin Freeman Sr., 39 years old, and his son, Martin Freeman Jr., 19, who died in the mine together.

Andrew and Joseph Spinner, brothers, are to be buried Monday. Funeral processions are common sights these days in Centralia and surrounding communities.

Mayors of Centralia and the surrounding towns — Central City, Wamac, Sandoval and Glenridge—have proclaimed Monday "A Day of Mourning" for those killed in the disaster. Schools will close and most of the stores, with the exception of drug stores and some groceries, will close. A memorial service will be held in the Centralia high school gymnasium at 11 a.m. Monday.

Contributions to the fund for the families of needy victims of the blast, collected under the auspices of the Mayor of Centralia, reached a total of $10,774 tonight.

When all the bodies are removed from the mine, Scanlan told the Post-Dispatch, the mine will be closed and fresh air will be pumped continuously through the workings until all the poisonous and inflammable gases are forced out.

"There will be a tremendous amount of repair work to do if the company reopens the mine," Scanlan said. "Passageways to abandoned workings that had been sealed up were blown open by the explosion, roof sections, tracks and electric wires were torn down. The mine communication system was wrecked. That's what I know about now. There may be more damage. It will be several days after the gas has been blown from the mine before a complete investigation can be made."

There was some question about conducting the inquest, because the mine reaches into Marion county from Washington county. This was settled by State's Attorney Wilbert Holt, who said, after a study of maps, that there was no question that the men died in Washington county.

Dr. George Green, coroner of Washington county, told the Post-Dispatch that he would charge his regular fee—$5—for a death certificate, which undertakers must secure before a body can be buried. At this rate he will receive $555. He will charge the prescribed $16 for the entire inquest, he said.

99 WIDOWS, 78 CHILDREN UNDER 18, REPORTED LEFT BY MINERS KILLED IN BLAST

Special to the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., March 29.

A compilation, made today by Hugh White, president of the United Mine Workers of Illinois, at Springfield, shows that 99 widows and 78 dependent children under 18 years of age were left by the miners killed in the disaster here.

White said the reason the number of dependent children is low was that most of the miners were elderly men, with the average age of those killed in the mine being 55 years.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 29

CENTRALIA HONORS ITS DEAD AT MEMORIAL SERVICES

11 CLERGYMEN CONDUCT MEETING AT HIGH SCHOOL, RITES AT CHURCH

Community Dedicates Day to Public Expression of Grief Over Death of 111 Miners—Many Funeral Processions.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 1

By EVARTS GRAHAM JR.
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 1—Holy Week has a special significance for the residents of grief-stricken Centralia. The bodies of the last 31 of the 111 miners killed in last Tuesday's explosion at the Centralia Coal Co., mine near here were removed from the mine early on Palm Sunday and during the week Centralians are mourning their dead.

The Rev. Robert B. Guthrie, pastor of the Mount Vernon (Ill.) Presbyterian Church, compared the sacrifice of Christ crucified with the sacrifice of the men in the mine at a special memorial service conducted yesterday in the gymnasium of Centralia High School.

"Certain individuals and certain groups of people bore a larger share of blame for the crucifixion of Christ than others, but behind it all was a general indifference to human welfare and moral values on the part of the entire populace," he told the audience of more than 500 persons. "That is also true of the disaster at Mine No. 5."

Biblical Promise Read.

The Biblical promise that "the house of the Lord has many mansions" was read to relatives and friends of the dead miners at yesterday's memorial service at the high school. The service was sponsored by the Centralia Ministerial Alliance.

A special memorial service for Catholics was held yesterday at St. Mary's Church. Many persons who might have attended one of the two services were attending funerals.

Flanked by two floral wreaths on each side of the auditorium stage, 11 clergymen, 10 Protestant and one Catholic, sat on the stage in front of the 50-voice chorus of the Centralia High School.

The audience joined in singing "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" and "Beneath the Cross of Jesus." The Rev. Arthur Schmidt, pastor of Lutheran Redeemer Church here, was in charge of the service.

Other Pastors Present.

In addition to the Rev. M. Guthrie, other clergymen who participated were: The Rev. Milton Q. Connett, pastor of Second Methodist Church; the Rev. E. U. Yates, First Methodist Church; the Rev. August F. Warskow, Zion Evangelical and Reformed Church; the Rev. Cecil Covey, Free Methodist Church; the Rev. Louis W. Bean, First Baptist Church; the Rev. J. M. Baldwin, Salem Baptist Church; the Rev. F. M. Halbig, St. Ann's Catholic Church, Nashville, and the Rev. R. L. Thorp, First Christian Church.

At the conclusion of the service, the audience stood and sang, "Abide With Me," the clergymen and chorus filed up the aisles of the auditorium.

The members of the audience, some of whom had finally allowed some of their pent-up sorrow to escape, and were wiping little tears from the corners of their eyes, walked outside. It was a gray, leaden day, with over-cast skies, but another spring was in the air. Buds on bushes at the entrance to the gymnasium were beginning to open.

21 Funeral Processions.

There were 21 funeral processions moving through the streets of Centralia and adjoining communities today, and 11 more are scheduled for tomorrow. In order to expedite the burials, some joint funeral services are being held for relatives and friends who were killed in the blast.

The bodies of Otto J. Buehne, his nephew, Raymond Buehne, and Charles McGreavey, were buried in Calvary Cemetery here today after a joint service at St. Mary's Catholic Church.

A joint service will be held at the church tomorrow for four friends, Frank Paulaskis, Domenico Lenzini, Celso Biagi and Stanley Tickus. There will be a double service at Gilead Methodist Church tomorrow for two brothers, Clifford B. Copple and Francis W. Copple.

The streets of downtown Centralia were virtually deserted yesterday as the town observed a day of mourning for the dead miners. Some children played in the yards of tree-lined residential streets, but their parents spent most of the day in their homes, recuperating from the long ordeal.

Other Towns Observe Day.

The day of mourning, during which all schools and business establishments were closed, was observed also in four other communities — Wamac, Central City, Sandoval and Glenridge.

Mayor O. W. Wright's fund for needy families of mine disaster victims reached $20,000 today.

Yesterday's editions of the local newspaper, the Centralia Sentinel, were published with the rules turned, so that black lines of mourning separated the columns. There were palm leaves and floral wreaths at the top of the newspaper's front page, and a complete list of the names of the dead men was printed in black, bold face type.

Scanlan Won't Gamble With Men's Lives Because He Was 'Raised in a Coal Mine'

Inspector Who Was 'Too Damned Honest' to Suit Higher-ups Not Worried About Losing Job.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 1

BY HARRY WILENSKY
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

NASHVILLE, Ill., April 1—The man who was "too damned honest" to suit the higher-ups in the Illinois Department of Mines — Driscoll Scanlan, state mine inspector for District 13—is deceptively quiet and softspoken.

He doesn't look like the sort of man who will defy his boss time and again, and there is nothing in his reserved manner to indicate he is capable of creating a nation-wide sensation.

Those who know the man and his background were not surprised, however, to learn the inspector had contemptuously ignored orders to shake the mine owners down for political contributions. Equally understandable was his refusal to keep quiet about the danger of a dust explosion in the Centralia Coal Co.'s Mine No. 5.

Scanlan was "raised in a coal mine" as he puts it, and gambling with miners lives or accepting bribes from operators would go against the grain.

As a child, his idea of a delightful Sunday outing was to go down into a mine with his father, Patrick Scanlan, who is now a foreman at the Mt. Olive & Staunton Coal Co. Mine No. 2. As a youth of 16, he got his first mine job helping surveyors map the Breese-Trenton mine at Beckemeyer. As a man he worked at every type of mine job, from loading and driving a mule to laying track and handling cutting machines.

Appointed to State Job in 1941.

For 13 years he was mine examiner (inspector) for the Clarkson Coal Co. here. Then came two years of shaft sinking. Gov. Dwight H. Green appointed him to the State Mine Inspection Service in 1941.

Scanlan says he does not smoke and never touches a drop of whisky, although he indulges in beer occasionally. "Instead of spending my time in saloons," he declared, "I read books on mining and went to night mining school at Worden, Ill."

Four brothers also went into mining, and he sees two of them, Edward and Wendell Scanlan, when he pays his periodic inspection visits to the Venedy (Ill.) Coal Co.

Scanlan was in bed, resting after his grueling five-day experience directing recovery operations at the scene of the Centralia disaster, when this reporter called at his white frame cottage on the outskirts of Nashville.

—By a Post-Dispatch Staff Photographer.

DRISCOLL SCANLAN

"Since you exposed the shakedown of the mine operators, I guess the Post-Dispatch is entitled to a little preference over the other papers," he said in disclosing his sensational charges against Robert M. Medill, director of the Department of Mines and Minerals.

The pajama-clad inspector sucked cough drops as he talked, his throat being raw from the fumes in the gas-swept Mine No. 5. His hands on the bedcovers were still begrimed with coal dust ground into the pores.

Taken to Task for Honesty.

He grinned and ran his fingers through his thinning hair as he related how Medill had taken him to task for being "too honest."

"It was at a conference in the Jefferson Hotel at Mount Vernon," he said. "An oil operator wanted to drill a well through the Glen Ridge mine at Centralia, and I opposed it as a hazard. I was afraid there'd be lives lost, but the chiefs of the oil and gas division who were with Medill wanted to issue a permit.

"Medill could have overruled me, but he preferred to get my agreement and I wouldn't go along.

"He told the two chiefs I had a lot of ability and could go places in the industry, but I was just too damned honest. He wasn't joking, either. He was serious; I thought he was going to fire me."

Not Worried About Job.

Asked if he were worried about losing his $3300-a-year job as inspector as a result of his denunciation of Medill for letting the Centralia mine operate despite its hazards, Scanlan shook his head.

"I'm not worried," he said, adjusting the gold-rimmed glasses beneath his bushy eyebrows. "I'm convinced Medill was doing things Gov. Green never would have approved. Furthermore, I don't want a job if I can't do the right thing on it. I could go to work for some good coal company if I lost this job."

Scanlan is married but childless. He owns his home, and would enjoy a spell of hunting with his water spaniels, of which he has "about 12" at present. He is far from well-to-do, but he knows he commands the admiration of miners everywhere and the respect of the good coal mine operators.

For him, that is enough.

CHICAGO ELECTION COST 111 MINERS' LIVES, PRICE SAYS

Congressman Attacks Lug —Asserts Inspectors Should Be Free of Politics.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 1

By GEORGE H. HALL
A Washington Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

WASHINGTON, April 1—Representative Melvin Price (Dem.) Illinois, said today in commenting on Post-Dispatch revelations of the part politics played in state coal mine inspections:

"It looks like 111 coal miners paid with their lives for the Republicans' efforts to elect a mayor of Chicago."

Price referred to two things:

The accusation by State Mine Inspector Driscoll Scanlan that Robert M. Medill, untill today director of the Illinois State Department of Mines and Minerals, refused to close the Centralia Coal Co.'s No. 5 mine despite the fact Scanlan predicted a fearful explosion and begged Medill to shut the pit.

Disclosure by the Post-Dispatch that state mine inspectors had put the "lug" on mine operators for Republican political contributions.

"Too great a tribute cannot be paid to Scanlan," Price said. "He recognized the facts in this situation and he had the courage to speak out. I understand he has been held in highest regard by the miners. They look upon him as a champion. It seems their confidence was well placed."

Price said the article in this newspaper yesterday, in which Harry Wilensky of the Post-Dispatch staff detailed Scanlan's charges, was so important that he would place the entire text in the Congressional Record.

The mayoralty election in Chicago, to which Price alluded, is being held today. The Republicans have made an all-out effort to win.

"This was absolutely a case of negligence on the part of the state inspectors," Price continued. "More than that, if the general public didn't know about the conditions in this mine, one man did. He was Gov. Green of Illinois. Also, the State Mine Board knew about them — Scanlan told them. The miners themselves told the Governor."

Price said that Illinois has strong mining laws, perhaps the best in the nation, but that proper enforcement is lacking. The miners' chief safeguard is an honest, uninfluenced mine inspector, he said. He deplored the fact Illinois inspectors are not adequately protected by civil service laws.

"If there is any strong civil service group in Illinois," he said, "it should be the mine inspectors. They should be free of pressure, inside and outside the state government. They should be able to assume that if they perform their duties, no political boss can touch them. It is too bad honest men like Scanlan cannot have more lega. protection.

"When you allow the state inspectors to put a political tap on the operators, the supposition is that the operators are going to get something. Does that mean that in the future the state intended to close its eyes to other violations?

"Coming when the disaster did, so close on the disclosure that the inspectors were demanding political money, it gives one cause to wonder."

Price who yesterday inserted in the Congressional record two Post-Dispatch editorials placing responsibility for the catastrophe on Gov. Green, the mine operators and the State Department of Mines, pointed out that previous complaints of the miners were answered by establishment of an official investigating commission that found "insufficient evidence" to close the mine.

"I wonder now," Price said, "if they feel the complaints were justified".

Responsibility on State

Primary responsibility for enforcing safety in the mines rests on the state, in Price's opinion. He recalled that when the Federal Mine Inspection Act was passed in 1941, it was expressly stated that "state laws govern and are the laws with which the operators must comply".

He pointed out that while the federal mine inspection system "is a pretty good one," the act that created it gave it no teeth. The only penalty is that an operator can be fined up to $500 or jailed for up to 90 days for refusing to permit a federal inspector to enter a mine. There is no obligation, under the original act, for the operator to accept or act upon the recommendations of the federal examiner.

Under the Krug-Lewis agreement of last May 29, by which the Federal Government now is operating the mines, the federal inspectors have the authority to enforce the safety recommendations by replacing an operating manager.

The first inspection of the Centralia pit under the agreement was made last November. On this occasion it was found that 60 articles of the federal mine safety code, promulgated according to the Krug-Lewis pact, were in violation.

The second federal inspection under the agreement was concluded five days before the fatal explosion, which occurred March 25. At this time 51 of the 60 articles still were being violated. This report was not shaped up and delivered in Washington until last Friday night.

Dying Miners' Notes Tell of Love And Concern for Their Families

Group Trapped Deep in Centralia Pit Wrote: 'Dear Wife, Goodbye' . . . 'Be Good Boys' . . . 'Get the Baby Baptized.'

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 31

By a Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., March 31—The tragedy and pathos of the Centralia mine horror reached a climax today, when the farewell notes, written by a group of 14 or 15 of the trapped miners to their families were made public by the mine management and delivered to the men's wives

In the extreme southwestern workings of Mine No. 5, three and one-half miles from the shaft, the men had time and consciousness which was not granted to those overtaken nearer to the source of the poisonous fumes. They used the time in writing the farewell messages, which they knew to be such. Nearly all the notes were simple expressions of love for wife and children, and poignant evidences of anxiety for their future.

The notes, found in the shirt or trousers pockets of the writers, were examined by the investigators and the mine authorities, and were delivered to the families for whom they were intended.

Reconstructing the scene in the distant underground chamber—Room 8 on No. 23 south, fourth west—it appears that the men either heard the distant explosion at 3:27 p.m. Tuesday or were warned by the stoppage of power for the cars which carried coal and men. Some may have gone far enough outside the room to see the dust pouring down the corridor.

Returning to the room most distant from the deadly onrushing cloud, the miners lay on the floor, in postures where they might breathe whatever oxygen remained free of the poisoned air. In this position, it appeared, they wrote their farewells on notebook leaves or bits of wrapping paper.

In a pathetic and futile effort to gain a little air space against imminent asphyxiation, one man removed his helmet and scooped a little hole in the coal wall at the farther side of the chamber. He was found with his face pressed against this hole, and his back to the others.

The men in the room, all prostrate on the floor, were in different postures, on their faces, backs or sides. All seemed to have lain down while conscious, nearly all were extended at full length.

Ned Jackson put his message to his family on a slab of slate, with a piece of chalk.

"D. T.," he wrote, "take care of Elva and Dickie. NED."

Raymond Buehne, whose three children are from 3 months to 8 years old, addressed his wife by her nickname, "Chub." Three lines were written below this name, of which the first and third were illegible. The middle line was "God bless you all," and the signature was "Beanie. 4:30."

Some others made records of the approximate time, and the latest of these, it is believed, was an unsigned note with the words "It is seeping in on us. 6:30 a.m." The time notation is believed to have been an error, and should have been "6:30 p.m."

The texts of other messages, given out today without the identities of the writers, were:

"To my wife: It looks like the end for me. I love you, honey, more than life itself. If I don't make it, please do the best you can and always remember and love me, honey. You are the sweetest wife in the world. Goodbye, honey, and Dickey."

"Goodbye (name) and (name): God bless you and two boys, your father and (name). Please do as your father has told you and listen to mom."

(Addressed to two boys) "Be good boys. Please your father. O Lord, help me."

"Dear Wife: Please take care of the children. Leave all to my wife. Love."

"Dear Wife: Goodbye. Forgive me. Take care of all the children. Love."

"Dear Mother and Sisters and Brothers: "I am fine at 5:30 p.m. It looks better, getting some air. (Name) is in bad shape, moaning and going on. (Name), take care of Mother. Tell (name) I forgive her. See about security insurance. We won't all get out. We found a place in the air a little. The smoke was bad. God bless you all. Your loving son.

"Everyone going, all are gone but Joe Ballantini, Fred Gutzler, Ned Jackson of the Joy (refers to machine) is here. Don't know about the others."

"Dear Sweetheart and sons: It's now 6 o'clock. (name) is feeling pretty low, but honey, if I don't make it, sell the house and go live with your folks. Your mom and dad will take care of you and the boys. Please pray for me and join the church for me. Tell dad to quit the mine and take care of mom, not like this. Well baby, and my loving boys, goodbye as I am feeling weak. Lots of love."

"Dear Wife and Sons: Well, hon, it looks like this is the end. Please tell mom and dad I still love them. Please get the baby baptized and send (name) to the Catholic school. Well, I love you all, and please take care of them and raise them good Christians. I love them. Love to all of you."

"Dear Wife: God bless you and your baby."

A notice on the rock face above the bodies directed the searchers to "look in everybody's pockets. We all have notes. Give them to our wives."

Some of the bits of paper on which the men wrote were leaves from the foreman's time book. The names of all men in the group were in the book, but it was not shown whether they had been written there before or after the explosion.

The men apparently made no attempt to throw up earthen walls at the entrance of the distant room in which they were found, to keep out the seeping fumes.

TEXT OF GOV. GREEN'S ORDER FOR CLOSING OF COAL MINES THAT VIOLATE SAFETY RULES

CHICAGO, April 1.

FOLLOWING is the text of Gov. Green's telegram Saturday to Robert Medill, State Director of Mines:

"You are hereby directed to conduct without delay a resurvey of all of the coal mines in Illinois to determine whether any of them are violating safety regulations prescribed by state and federal laws for the protection of miners.

"In the meantime I direct that you communicate immediately with each mine inspector in the 14 districts of Illinois. If in their judgment there is any mine in their district which is not now operating with proper protection for workers, you will advise the Federal Coal Mines Administration of that fact and request that the federal operators not permit those mines to open Monday.

"In the event that the Coal Mines Administration fails to order such mines closed, you will direct the inspectors of the districts where the unsafe mines are located to proceed to close them under the authority vested in them by Illinois laws."

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 1

U.S. STEEL CORP. OUTPUT CUT

PITTSBURGH, April 1 (AP)—The United States Steel Corp. today announced curtailment of pig iron output because of the mourning period of the United Mine Workers.

A spokesman said production equivalent to that of five and one-half blast furnaces was being lost, or about 5000 tons daily.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 1

The Sentinel, in one of its accounts of the mine tragedy, said today:

"Perhaps one of the most tragic figures throughout a long week of suspense, while recovery of the bodies was in progress, was Milton H. Young, president of Bell and Zoller Coal and Mining Co. and vice president of Centralia Coal Co. Bowed with grief and carrying on only on his nerve to see that nothing was overlooked or left undone which might expedite the rescue of the entrapped men, he refused to give up hope until the final report came to him Saturday that the last of the 31 missing men had been located."

FEDERAL MINE SAFETY CODE SET UP AFTER U. S. SEIZURE

Terms of Krug-Lewis Agreement — Inspectors Without Power to Enforce Findings.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 30

By a Washington Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

WASHINGTON, March 29—The Federal Government made two inspections of the Centralia Coal Co.'s No. 5 mine. The first was made from Nov. 4 to Nov. 6, 1946. The second was made from March 17 to March 20, 1947, five days before the explosion that killed 111 miners.

Both inspections were made under regulations of the code of safety and practice adopted after the Government seized the mines. The United Mine Workers, the coal operators and the federal administrator participated in drafting the code. It went into effect last July 29.

Terms of Agreement.

The Krug-Lewis agreement of last May 29, under which the Government is operating the mines, provided that this code should be put into effect. The agreement states:

"The coal mines administrator shall put this code into effect at the mines. Inspectors of the Federal Bureau of Mines shall make periodic investigations of the mines and report to the coal mines administrator any violations of the federal safety code.

"In cases of violation, the coal mines administrator will take appropriate action which may include disciplining or replacing the operating manager so that with all reasonable dispatch said violation will be corrected."

The agreement continues:

"At each mine there shall be a mine safety committee selected by the local union. The mine safety committee may inspect any mine development or equipment used in producing coal for the purpose of ascertaining whether compliance with the federal safety code exists.

"The committee members while engaged in the performance of their duties shall be paid by the union, but shall be deemed to be acting within the scope of their employment in the mine within the meaning of the workmen's compensation law of the state where such duties are performed.

Powers of Committee.

"If the committee believes conditions found endanger the life and bodies of the mine workers, it shall report its findings and recommendations to the management. In those special instances where the committee believes an immediate danger exists and the committee recommends that the management remove all mine workers from the unsafe area, the operating manager or his managerial subordinate is required to follow the recommendation of the committee, unless and until the coal mines administrator, taking into account the inherently hazardous character of coal mining determines that the authority of the safety committee is being misused and he cancels or modifies that authority."

The original act providing for federal inspection of mines was passed in May 1941. It delegates authority to the inspectors to go underground and inspect, report, recommend and publish findings. There are not enforcement provisions.

Under a ruling of former Interior Secretary Harold L. Ickes publication was deemed to mean filing of typewritten copies of the inspectors' reports in offices where they would be accessible to the public.

Distribution of Reports.

The distribution of reports is set up to include the following:

One copy to the operator, one to the United Mine Workers' local at the mine, one to the UMW district office, one to UMW President John L. Lewis, one to headquarters of the Progressive Miners at Springfield, Ill., one to the state district mine inspector, one to the chief state mine inspector, one to the district engineer of the Bureau of Mines and one to the Washington office of the Bureau of Mines.

About 4000 reports are filed annually, covering some 3000 mines. The authorized number of inspectors recently was raised from 157 to 180. Of the total, 30 are undergoing a training course at Pittsburgh, Pa. The men are under civil service and receive salaries ranging generally from $3400 to $6300 annually.

WORKERS CLEANING UP ILLINOIS MINE HAZARDS IN MOURNING PERIOD

CENTRALIA, April 2.

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS mines are being cleaned up and made safe for miners during the Holy Week "period of mourning," it was announced today by Hugh White, president of the United Mine Workers in Illinois.

UMW members are being used for this work, he said. White said the safety move was taken at the suggestion of the Southern Illinois Coal Operators Association.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 2

THIRD TRUSTEE OF MINE WELFARE FUND IS NAMED

Thomas E. Murray of New York Chosen — Benefits to Centralia Families Likely Soon.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 31

By GEORGE H. HALL
A Washington Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

WASHINGTON, March 31 — Thomas E. Murray of New York has been selected as the third member of the board of trustees of the United Mine Workers welfare fund, it was announced today.

If Murray consents to serve, and the UMW assumes he will, the way will be opened for a distribution of funds to aid the families of the 111 men killed in the explosion at the Centralia (Ill.) Coal Company's Mine No. 5 last Tuesday.

The trustees, under the Krug-Lewis agreement of last May 29, will administer a fund that now amounts to probably $18,000,000. It will be up to them to formulate a plan for use of the money.

Lewis and Collisson on Board.

The trustees appointed earlier were John L. Lewis, president of the UMW, and Capt. N. H. Collisson, Coal Mines Administrator for the Interior Department.

Murray is president of the Metropolitan Engineering Corp., of Brooklyn, and a director of the Chrysler Corp., and of the Bank of New York. He was trustee, and receiver for the Interborough Rapid Transit Co., (subway) when it was in bankruptcy some years ago. He is a graduate of the Sheffield Scientific School of Yale University and a Papal Knight of St. Gregory.

The Krug-Lewis agreement provideds that the fund, obtained from contributions by the mine operating managers of 5 cents a ton of coal produced after last June 1, should be managed by three trustees, one selected by the Government, one by the UMW and a third by the first two.

Last Feb. 26 Lewis sent Collisson a list of 11 names of persons acceptable to him. It is understood these persons were investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Today Collisson said Murray would be acceptable to the Coal Mines Administration.

No estimate was available as to how long it might take the trustees to set up a plan and start funds moving to the families of the Centralia victims, but the UMW said that it "probably would not take very long."

Meawhile, as a stopgap, national UMW headquarters has sent $100 to each of the families who suffered a loss in the disaster. The money is a gift, not a loan, and is for the purpose of carrying over the dependents until Illinois Workmen's Compensation payments can begin. The UMW board is authorized to make such payments in major catastrophes.

The Krug-Lewis contract provides that the welfare fund shall be used for making payments to the miners and their dependents and survivors with respect to wage loss not otherwise compensated at all or not compensated adequately and for other related welfare purposes, to be determined by the trustees.

The UMW is not authorized to employ funds of the international for this purpose, except as noted. Assets of the Mine Workers' Union, the UMW says, are about $14,000,000.

MINE SAFETY DEVICE SOLD BY U.S. TO PRIVATE FIRM; DETECTS CARBON MONOXIDE

WASHINGTON, March 28 (UP)

THE Government sold to a private concern yesterday equipment to build a warborn device that will detect in 60 seconds presence of carbon monoxide fumes in mines and elsewhere.

The detector was invented and made exclusively during the war by the Bureau of Standards. It is a five-inch glass tube the size of a pencil. It is relatively inexpensive and easy to use. A yellow mixture in the tube turns green at the presence of carbon monoxide.

War Assets Administration sold the bureau's equipment, which was built at a cost of $6423, to the Mines Safety Appliance Co., Pittsburgh, for $9500. Four firms have been licensed to make the tubes.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 28

MEDILL BLAMES INSPECTOR FOR MINE DISASTER

Former Illinois Bureau Director Asserts Scanlan Should Have Closed Centralia Pit.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 1

By a Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 1—Robert M. Medill, who resigned today as director of the Illinois State Department of Mines and Minerals, charged State Mine Inspector Driscoll Scanlan with responsibility for the death of the 111 miners killed at the Centralia Coal Co. No. 5 mine last week.

Medill issued his statement in further reply to Scanlan's charge that when the inspector begged Medill to close the Centralia mine, because of the danger of a dust explosion, Medill had replied, "We'll just have to take that chance."

"If Scanlan would have performed his duty as prescribed under the law," Medill declared, "the 111 miners killed in the Centralia disaster would be alive today."

Medill asserted that "Scanlan had the personal knowledge and should have performed his duty by closing the mine."

Yesterday, however, Medill said that although inspectors have the theoretical power to close unsafe mines, it was the practice of inspectors not to take such action without consulting Medill.

From Illinois mining laws, revised edition, July 1945, Medill quoted the following section:

"If any state inspector, or county inspector, shall find any proof that this act is being violated it shall be his duty to file a sworn complaint before any court of competent jurisdiction stating the facts within his knowledge in such case and asking that the person charged with such violation be bound over to the next grand jury for the county.

"And it shall be the duty of the State's Attorney for the county in which such violation occurs to prosecute such complaint as provided by law in other state cases."

"For example," Medill's statement said, "when a state highway policeman or a food inspector sees a violation he arrests the person by going to the state's attorney and securing a complaint." At this point Medill asserted Scanlan should have closed the mine.

Medill, who began digging coal at the age of 16, further charged: "It is deplorable and unbelievable that any man would stoop so low as to capitalize on a disaster and even go so far as to attempt to incite to riot."

"It seems to me," Medill said, "that Scanlan's methods were not practical. Instead of following the laws of our great state, Scanlan spent his time making a big noise and doing nothing about it.

"I, as a coal miner, have always had the miners' interests at heart and will continue to do so. It has been my policy and instructions to the inspectors to follow the exact letter of the law."

Scanlan's Comment.

After reading Medill's statement, Scanlan told reporters: "Complaints were filed through the years about the Centralia mine and about others, but no arrests were made. We couldn't enforce the law. The record speaks for itself, they wouldn't let you arrest anyone."

Scanlan then prepared the following statement: "I do not propose to engage in controversy with my superior, Robert Medill. All my reports have been completed in detail and sent to him, describing conditions in the Centralia Coal Co.'s mine No. 5, and in other mines in this area. These reports are self-explanatory.

"The local union officers of the United Mine Workers presented grievances against the superintendent and mine manager, requesting that their license be revoked several months ago on account of violations of the mining laws and ignoring recommendations of the state mine inspector.

"After a whitewash investigation, Mr. Medill reported that the commission found insufficient evidence to revoke the certificates of the superintendent or mine manager. Therefore, it is my suggestion that the miners in this district be interviewed as to the existing conditions in this mine and other mines in the coal fields of Illinois. Let the miners give their reports on all the Illinois mines under the leadership of Mr. Medill."

Medill yesterday said he could not remember the conversation, reported by Scanlan, in which Scanlan said he had begged Medill to close Mine No. 5.

"I remember attending a safety meeting at Belleville," said Medill, "and I recall Scanlan being there. I don't remember what was said, however."

AFL HEAD GREEN PRAISES MINERS' WORK STOPPAGE TO HONOR DEAD IN BLAST

COLUMBUS, O., March 31 (UP)

WILLIAM GREEN, president of the American Federation of Labor, praised the AFL United Mine Workers' Union yesterday for its announced mourning period and work stoppage to honor miners killed in the Centralia (Ill.) mine explosion.

Speaking before 2100 delegates to the special legislative conference of the Ohio State Federation of Labor, Green said, "I call upon you all to join the miners in the week of mourning in spirit if not in action."

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 31

W.P. Young Heads Chicago Group In Control of Centralia Mine

W. P. YOUNG of Chicago is the effective head of operations at the Centralia (Ill.) coal mine where 111 miners died after an explosion which had been predicted in repeated warnings of unsafe conditions in the mine.

Walter J. Johnson is general superintendent of the mine site and Harry Niermann serves as his assistant.

From his desk at 307 North Michigan avenue, Chicago, Young exercises effective control over the mine near Centralia, over the Bell & Zoller Coal Co., sales agent for the mine's output, and over the Bell and Zoller Coal and Mining Co., a $1,000,000 corporation with other mining interests, the Post-Dispatch was told by J. W. Broadway, secretary of all three firms. The Centralia Coal Co. is capitalized at $400,000 and the sales agency at $20,000.

Broadway said there is no corporate connection between the three firms. Officers and directors of the three firms, however, are interlocking. All the men who exercise control over the firms are residents of Chicago, Broadway said.

Officers of the Centralia Coal Co. are H. F. McDonald, president; Young, vice president; Broadway, secretary, and C. W. Peterson, treasurer. Directors are McDonald, Young, H. E. Bell and H. E. Baldwin.

Officers of the Bell & Zoller Coal Co. are McDonald, president; Broadway, secretary and Peterson, treasurer. Directors are Bell, Young, Peterson and Baldwin.

Officers of the Bell & Zoller Coal and Mining Co. are Young, president; Broadway, secretary, and Peterson, treasurer. Directors are Young, McDonald, Peterson, Baldwin, H. E. Bell and John Bell.

Broadway said Young had been with the group of enterprises including the Centralia mine for about 26 years.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 30

COAL SHUTDOWN IS 'STRIKE,' SAY OWNERS IN SOUTH

Lewis Action 'Challenges Government and Defies Its Courts and Laws,' Spokesman Asserts.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 31

CHARLESTON, W. Va., March 31 (AP)—The secretary of the Southern Coal Producers Association yesterday labeled John L. Lewis's order for a six-day mine shutdown a "strike" and said it was a "peculiar method of paying respect to the dead."

Walter Thurmond of Charleston said in a statement that Lewis, in suspending mining as a memorial to the Centralia (Ill.) explosion victims, "is only attempting to show the country his complete and unbridled control over the actions and lives of the 400,000 members of his union."

"He challenges the Government and defies its courts and laws," Thurmond said. "Lewis was forestalled by the courts in his attempted strike as of April 1, and this ostensible mourning period is only a method of bringing to pass by subterfuge what he could not accomplish by direct action."

Lewis, in informing the miners of the mourning holiday, called their attention to a provision in the old contract with the operators that the union "may designate memorial periods provided it shall give proper notice to each district." The agreement with the Government carries over all contract provisions not superseded by new terms.

Standing on that provision, union officers in Washington had no comment last night on Thurmond's statement.

As miners prepared to implement Lewis's order by not reporting for shifts which ordinarily would go underground late tonight or early tomorrow, Thurmond asked:

"Why did he (Lewis) not take some affirmative and constructive action which would not only have brought tangible relief to the dependents and stricken ones, but would have been a memorial to him and his union?

"Why did he not take 5 per cent of the $15,000,000 in his swollen treasury—$750,000—and appropriate it to the use of the widows and orphans? Certainly it would not have been a burden on his treasury but it would have been almost $7000 for each affected family.

"There is no reason except his desire to maintain an astronomical cash balance for such uses as he may desire to make of it.

"Why, instead of ordering a week of idleness did he not tell each of his 400,000 men to work one extra hour next week and allocate the earnings of that hour to the grief-stricken families of Centralia? That one hour's donation would have amounted to more than $800,000, or almost $6000 for each family."

Thurmond said Lewis's action would throw 400,000 miners out of work for a week with an aggregate wage loss of about $28,000,000 and that it also would interrupt the supply of coal to stricken countries of Europe.

UMW District President Assails Thurmond Statement.

CHARLESTON, W. Va., March 31 (AP)—William Blizzard, president of District 17 of the AFL United Mine Workers, rebuked Secretary Walter R. Thurmond of the Southern Coal Producers Association today for criticising the miners' six-day work stoppage.

"We at least expected from him (Thurmond) and the group he represents," said Blizzard, "a silent prayer on behalf of the Centralia coal miners."

Blizzard declared observance of the mourning period would be "unanimous as far as District 17 is concerned."

Answering Thurmond, Blizzard said the Centralia explosion victims "did not even receive the courtesy of silence, let alone a —prayer."

"I hope," Blizzard continued, "he (Thurmond) will demonstrate enough courage that he will at least hang his head in shame for breaking into public print, rather than in silent prayer, during the memorial period in behalf of the brave men who lost their lives in the bowels of the earth."

COAL FIRM HEAD ADMITS GETTING U.S. REPORTS THAT MINE WAS UNSAFE

Says He Did Nothing About Findings Except to Turn Them Over to Vice President of the Concern.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 1

By SPENCER R. McCULLOCH
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CHICAGO, April 1—H. F. McDonald, president of the Centralia Coal Co., operating the mine in which 111 miners were killed last week, today admitted to the Post-Dispatch that he had received reports of Federal Bureau of Mines inspectors that the Centralia mine was unsafe, but had done nothing about them except to turn the reports over to William P. Young, vice president of the firm.

"Hell," said McDonald, "I don't know anything about a coal mine."

He said he had not followed up the mine safety reports to see if the conditions were corrected. McDonald received the reports, he said, because in addition to being president of the firm he is federal agent for the firm, under the United States Government seizure of the mines.

Federal Bureau of Mines inspectors cited 60 violations of the federal mine safety code at the Centralia mine in a report last November. In a second report, five days before the explosion last week, federal inspectors found that 51 of the violations had not been corrected.

McDonald said he received reports from federal inspections of the mine, but didn't know if he had authority to act on them or not. "If I did have such authority," he said, "I wouldn't assume it. That was Young's province and I have complete confidence in Young."

He and his fellow directors of the coal firm had "no idea" what went on at the mine," McDonald said.

McDonald, who is also president of Bell & Zoller Coal Co., sales agent for the mine, and a director of the $1,000,000 Bell & Zoller Coal Mining Corp., asserted that all operating problems were entrusted entirely to Young, who divides his time between this city and the southern Illinois coal fields. Young is president of the Bell & Zoller Coal Mining Corp., besides serving as a director of the Bell & Zoller Coal Co.

Seated in his richly furnished office today, McDonald asserted that Young was the "sole operating head" whose decisions were never questioned.

"We still, and I speak for the other directors," McDonald said, "have the utmost confidence in Mr. Young. He has had more than 20 years' experience in the operating field for us."

McDonald, who said he and his associates were concerned here with "sales only," told of the division of responsibility, after Young had appeared before a special meeting of directors and company officials called to discuss the Centralia tragedy.

It was disclosed by McDonald that the complaint of the miners, in a letter to Gov. Dwight H. Green, that hazardous conditions persisted despite inspections, had not come to his attention. He did not know whether Young had been informed of the letter, and said, in effect, that if Young had known of its existence he would not necessarily inform the other coal mining company executives and directors. All such matters, he reiterated, were left to Young's discretion.

Young, in Centralia last evening, announced that every lawful claim resulting from the mine tragedy will be paid in full. He issued the following statement through Verne E. Joy, publisher of the Centralia Sentinel:

"The officials of the Centralia Coal Co. are all stunned by the terrible tragedy at Centralia Mine No. 5, the cause of which we have to date been unable to ascertain. Till now all of our time has been devoted to every effort toward the saving of the lives of men in the mine. Hope had been maintained until last Saturday that more of the men might be saved. This hope has now proved futile.

"As soon as the mine can be reopened, everything possible will be done to ascertain the cause of the accident. While this will not lessen the grief of the families of the men whose lives have been lost, if the cause can be determined it may prevent future tragedies of this nature.

"Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to all of the families of the men whose lives have been lost. We are deeply grateful to all of those who gave so unstintingly of their time and in many cases risked their lives aiding in the rescue work.

"Payment of claims of the survivors and dependents cannot assuage their grief or lessen their loss, but we wish to state unhesitantly that no concern need be felt in regard to full payment of such claims.

"Every lawful claim arising out of this tragedy can and will be paid in full, and every co-operation will be given the families and the union representatives in promptly fixing the amounts payable."

McDonald, whose office is one of many occupying an entire floor utilized by the Bell & Zoller interests, said that a major stockholder of the company, H. E. Bell, was in California. Bell, one of the organizers of the Bell & Zoller Coal Co., about 40 years ago, is a capitalist of diverse interests and owns the skyscraper Lake Shore office building occupied by the company. The Southern Illinois Coal Operators' Association, comprising 35 major shipping mine companies, all with contracts with the United Mine Workers of America, maintains offices in the same building.

Asked whether the Bell & Zoller interests had been approached to contribute to the Chicago mayoralty campaign, McDonald said he had no "personal knowledge" of such a solicitation.

The Post-Dispatch has been informed reliably that Robert M. Medill, who resigned today as director of the Illinois Department of Mines and Minerals, personally sought contributions from major companies with offices here, including Bell & Zoller, at the behest of Gov. Green.

MEDILL QUITS UNDER FIRE; GOV. GREEN ORDERS INQUIRY BOARD TO 'PULL NO PUNCHES'

MINE BLAST BOARD IS TOLD TO GET ALL FACTS IN DISASTER AT CENTRALIA PIT

Governor Declines to Say if He Asked Inspection Chief to Resign—Illinois U. Man in Job Temporarily.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 1

By SELWYN PEPPER
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 1—Robert M. Medill, director of the Illinois State Department of Mines and Minerals, has resigned "for the good of the service," it was announced by Gov. Dwight H. Green today after conferring with Medill at Centralia.

The announcement came as a fact-finding commission appointed by the Governor began inquiry into causes of the disastrous mine explosion which killed 111 men a week ago at Centralia Coal Co. Mine No. 5. At the commission's opening session Gov. Green told the investigators to "pull no punches in any respect."

Medill had been criticized widely for his alleged failure to enforce mine safety rules and for his participation, reportedly at the behest of Gov. Green, in an effort to collect political campaign funds from Illinois mine owners.

Gov. Green's announcement of Medill's resignation was made in the lobby of the Pittenger Hotel about an hour after the Governor had arrived in Centralia. "For the good of the service, Robert Medill has resigned as of today," he said.

Expects to Be "Vindicated."

Medill said the decision to resign was his own. He added that he believed he would be "vindicated" eventually.

"After a discussion with the Governor," he declared, "I decided it probably would be the best for all concerned for me to get out of the picture." Asked if his resignation had been requested by Gov. Green, Medill replied: "No sir, no sir."

Medill added that "Gov. Green is one of the finest men I ever have been associated with. He has just been grand to me. There isn't anything I wouldn't do for him if he called on me."

The Governor declined to state whether he had requested Medill's resignation. He also refused to elaborate on what he meant by "for the good of the service."

Prof. Harold Leroy Walker, head of the Department of Mining and Metallurgical Engineering at the University of Illinois, will head the department vacated by Medill, temporarily, Gov. Green said. He added that Walker had consented to hold the post only for a short time.

As soon as possible Gov. Green said he would make a permanent appointment. He said he would ask that names be submitted by Hugh White, Illinois president of the United Mine Workers of America; John McCann, president of the Progressive Mine Workers; Walter Gill, president of the Coal Producers' Association of Illinois, and George Campbell, president of the Illinois Coal Operators' Association.

Instructions to Board.

Gov. Green's instruction to the fact-finding commission to "pull no punches" was given in the presence of reporters at a 10-minute session this afternoon at the Pittenger Hotel.

John E. Cassidy, Peoria lawyer and former Attorney General of Illinois, selected by the Governor last night to head the state commission, told Gov. Green at the afternoon conference that the group wanted directions from him.

"Without any equivocation," Green replied, "your investigation should not be restricted in any way. There is no disposition on my part, and, I am confident, on the part of any one else to restrict you in your activities in any fashion whatever.

"Your investigation should be thorough, impartial and more or less exhaustive.

"You should consider yourselves a fact-finding body in behalf of the people. Every one will appreciate the public service you will perform."

The Governor at this point thanked the commission members for their willingness to serve.

"This commission," he continued, "was appointed with the basic thought that there should be somebody created to get at the facts as soon as possible.

"I would like to reiterate and emphasize — investigate anything, everything and everybody. In other words, pull no punches in any respect.

"If there are people who want to be heard, if you have time, hear them; they should be heard. That is, any one who can throw any light whatever on the cause of the explosion, the conditions at the mine or what happened after the explosion.

Doesn't "Want to Interfere."

"I don't want to interfere.

"I have asked T. P. Sullivan, state director of public safety, to assist you. If he can be of help, be free to call upon him. He also does not want to interfere. Run your own investigation. Conduct it in any fashion you deem best. You don't represent me or any particular agency. You represent all the people."

Chairman Cassidy responded: "Thank you, Governor. I hope we can get an avenue along which to work to accomplish this with dispatch. We don't want to spend too long a time. I hope we can get a reasonably early termination of the job."

Gov. Green said, in reply: "The greater expedition the better, but don't sacrifice thoroughness."

At his press conference, Gov. Green said that all he had known about conditions in the Centralia mine before the disaster "was the letter from the miners." He referred to the letter sent him by the union local at Mine No. 5, begging the Governor to "save our lives" by enforcing safety regulations at the mine.

"It so happens," he said, "that I was out of the state from sometime in February until March 16, 1946. My office handled the letter in the regular fashion, sending it for disposition by the department concerned." The letter was dated March 3, 1946.

Green, rather short and dapper, with graying hair and wearing a double-breasted blue suit, appeared to be choosing his words carefully throughout his brief address to the commission. He spoke slowly and deliberately and his manner seemed earnest. Upon adjournment of the commission session, the Governor called the reporters together and made the announcement of Medill's resignation.

Medill Receives Word.

About this time, in another part of the hotel, Medill was talking with a Post-Dispatch reporter in his room. He was interrupted by a political hanger-on, who said, "Bob, come on quick, and put your coat on." It was then, apparently, that Medill was informed of his "resignation."

Yesterday, Medill had been conversing by telephone with a friend in Colorado, where he formerly was employed. He said then: "Don't worry about me. Everything here is under control, and I can take care of myself." A reporter had asked Medill Sunday whether "when this is all over" Driscoll Scanlan, state mine inspector who reported bad conditions at this mine, would still have his job. Medill replied at that time: "When this is all over I don't know if I'll still have my job."

Gov. Green was guarded by a special Illinois Highway Patrol detachment, under Assistant Chief John C. Ritter, during his stay in Centralia. He visited Mayor O. A. Wright at the City Hall and the various public assistance offices here.

Mayor Wright told the Governor the Mayor's fund for relief of the families of the mine victims may reach $50,000. He said a St. Louis brewery has promised to send an additional $5000 and a Vincennes, Ind., mining firm, $3000. Gov. Green was traveling in a long black sedan, equipped with two-way radio, in which he was expected to return to Springfield tonight.

The state commission had met in executive session for 90 minutes this morning, discussing procedure. Chairman Cassidy said when that session ended:

"We could go on with day and night meetings for six months unless some limit to the investigation is defined." No decision has been announced as to whether commission hearings would be open to the press, but the Governor's attitude was taken as an indication they would be.

Tests of air in the mine today showed the mine still was unsafe for investigators to enter. A crew of miners will go into the mine at 5 a.m. tomorrow, and will come up again at 10 a.m. to report on the condition of the air at that time.

Senate Inquiry Thursday.

It was announced today that the investigation of the disaster by a subcommittee of the Public Lands Committee of the United States Senate would begin at Centralia City Hall at 10 a.m. Thursday. Members of the subcommittee are Senators Guy Cordon (Rep.), Oregon, chairman; H. C. Dworshak (Rep.), Idaho, and J. C. O'Mahoney (Dem.), Wyoming.

Announcement of the committee's plans was made by its special counsel, Frank Sever, lawyer, a former prosecuting official at Portland, Ore. He has been here since Saturday, arranging for witnesses. He made an appointment to confer today with the Governor's fact-finding commission, with the intention of coordinating activity. The Public Lands Committee comes into the picture because it deals with the Department of the Interior, which has handled the federal administration of coal mines.

In announcing membership of the commission Gov. Green said its function would be to ascertain all facts bearing on the cause of the explosion and all facts relating to conditions in the mine at the time of the disaster. Findings of the group, he said, would be made available to all public investigating bodies. Inquiries are in progress or planned by the Illinois Legislature and the Washington county grand jury.

Chairman Cassidy of the state commission is a Democrat, while Gov. Green is a Republican. Originally Green named Justice Charles W. Thompson, Harrisburg, of the Supreme Court of Illinois to represent the public on the commission. However, it was announced last night that Justice Thompson had telegraphed the governor his judicial duties would prevent him from serving.

Cassidy will be the public representative on the board. Gov. Green announced Cassidy's appointment was submitted beforehand to Secretary of Interior Krug and approved by him.

Cassidy was appointed attorney general of Illinois by the late Gov. Henry Horner to fill a vacancy created when Otto Kerner was appointed to the United States Circuit Court of Appeals in the seventh district. Cassidy served as attorney general from about 1936 to 1940. He led a state-wide campaign against slot machines and gambling about 1939. More recently he was attorney for a group of shippers who sought unsuccessfully to have a receiver appointed for the Toledo, Peoria and Western Railroad, whose president, George P. McNear Jr., was murdered.

Director of Public Safety Sullivan explained that Gov. Green had asked certain organizations to designate men to serve on the fact-finding board. Besides Cassidy, members of the board are:

Oliver Bishop of Ziegler, representative of the United Mine Workers of America, designated by Hugh White, president of District 12 of the UMW.

David H. Devonald of Chicago, vice president in charge of operations for the Peabody Coal Co., representing the Illinois Coal Operators' Association, designated by George F. Campbell, president of the association.

James Sneddon of Royalton, inspector-at-large for the State Mines and Minerals Department, named by Director Medill.

Wilbert J. Hohlt of Nashville, state's attorney for Washington county, who will seek to determine what evidence is available for the county grand jury.

John E. Jones of West Frankfort, safety engineer for the Old Ben Coal Corp. of Chicago, appointed by Krug as a representative of the Coal Mines Administration.

William A. Gallagher of Vincennes, Ind., supervising inspector and representative of the United States Bureau of Mines, also appointed by Krug.

The Washington county grand jury, which convenes April 14, will investigate to determine whether any criminal negligence led to the disaster, State's Attorney Hohlt said. If necessary, the grand jury will go into the mine he added.

As part of his own inquiry, Hohlt had a stenographer present at the press conference held yesterday by State Mine Inspector Driscoll Scanlan, who made a slashing attack on Medill yesterday.

After studying maps of the Centralia Coal Co. mine workings Hohlt found that all the victims died in Washington county and said there was no question that the Washington county grand jury has jurisdiction. Walter Johnson mine superintendent, said all the mine workings are in Washington county, although some parts of the mine are in Marion county.

Out for 'Good of Service'

—By a Post-Dispatch Staff Photographer.

ROBERT M. MEDILL
Illinois Director of Mines and Minerals, who resigned today under fire.

Reports of Profiteering, Robbery In Wake of Centralia Sightseers

By a Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 2—Reports of profiteering and armed robbery followed the influx here of sightseers, governmental officials and newspaper men drawn to this city by the recent mine disaster that claimed 111 lives.

The Chamber of Commerce has received complaints from visitors and residents alike that restaurants were demanding as much as $1.58 for a meal that formerly cost 76 cents. One man reported being charged 75 cents for a cup of coffee and a piece of pie with ice cream. Still another man estimated that a quart of orange juice for which he paid $1.50 had actually cost the restaurant about 25 cents for the oranges.

The Chamber deplored the gouging "for the wrong impression it would give of our city."

Wesley Hampton, night clerk at the Pittenger Hotel where many of those participating in the mine inquiry are lodged, reported to police that an armed and masked robber obtained $400 in cash from the hotel cash box early today. The robber entered the lobby from the rear and demanded the cash box at the point of a gun, Hampton said.

To add to the discomfiture of a number of state patrolmen staying at the hotel, it was discovered later that the safe in the manager's office had been opened and $250 was missing.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 2

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 27

The Mine Dead Speak

The man on whom responsibility for the horrible loss of life in the Centralia Coal Co. mine falls more heavily than on any other is Dwight H. Green, Governor of the State of Illinois.

Failure to be vigilant can be charged up to others as well—to Gov. Green's Director of the State Department of Mines, Robert M. Medill, to the operators of the coal company, to federal authorities who were legally in control of the mine.

None of these other failures mitigates in the least the responsibility which is Gov. Green's.

On March 3, 1946—more than a year ago—Local No. 52 of the United Mine Workers at Centralia sent a letter of protest to Gov. Green. This protest was against the hazardous conditions under which they were compelled to work since Gov. Green's State Department of Mines had refused to close the mine notwithstanding the reports of explosion hazard by the mine inspector.

The dead speak in this letter. They cry from behind the debris-closed walls in which many of them are still entombed.

The dead cry out that they were ignored by Gov. Green's State Mine Department.

They cry out that the inspector did his duty and wrote honest reports.

They cry out that if the laws were not enforced, there would be "a dust explosion at this mine just like happened in Kentucky and West Virginia."

They cry out that when they finally got an official investigating commission it contained a boss of the mine and that it would not permit the miners to call attention to unsafe conditions.

They cry out that when the report of the commission was at last obtained it "found insufficient evidence to revoke the certificate of the mine manager and superintendent."

They cry out that they sent Gov. Green a copy of the inspector's report, that they asked him to check it with the commission's report and with the federal mine inspection report of July, 1945.

They cry out that they asked the Governor to go to the mine and make a personal inspection in order to see how unfair his Department of Mines was to the miners, how its refusal to do its duty had placed their lives in grave danger.

They cry out that they were writing to the Governor because they did not believe he knew how unfair his mining department "is toward the men in this mine."

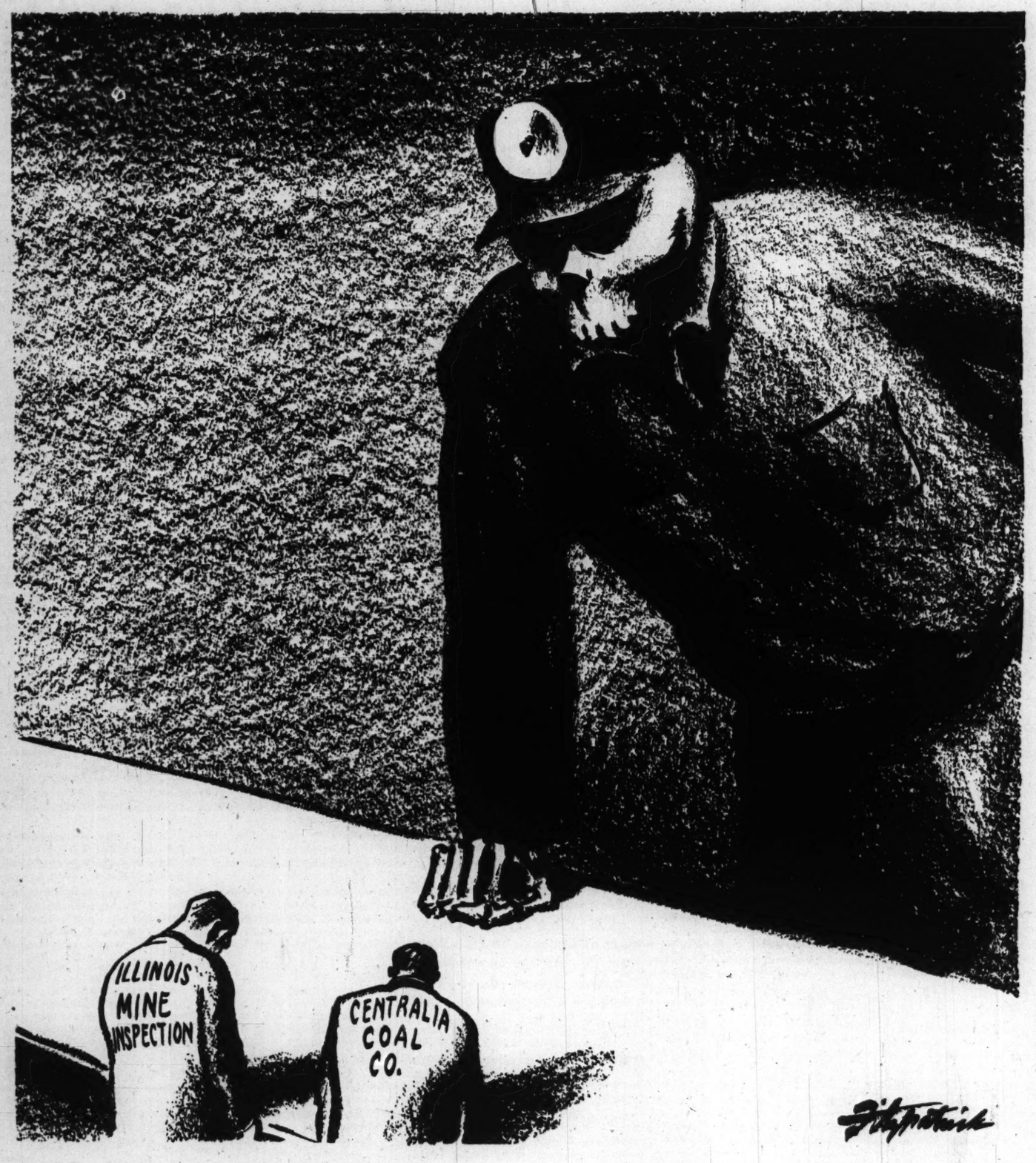
They cry out that they hoped for "an early personal reply from the Governor stating your position in regards to the enforcement of the state mining law."

Yet in the face of a warning like this, Dwight H. Green could be so unmoved as to do in effect absolutely nothing. Worse than that, he could permit his State Mine Department to become a political tool this month for the collection of funds for the Republican mayoral race in Chicago. For it became a chore of his mine inspectors to shake down mine operators for campaign contributions.

In face of a record like this, he could permit his inspection service to be further compromised, to be placed under obligation to mine operators!

Has ever retribution for what amounts to criminal negligence followed swifter or in a more terrible form?

Dwight H. Green is the first man to answer.



Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 27

"YOU GAMBLED BUT I PAID"

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 26

A Task for Gov. Green

Dwight H. Green held a press conference in Chicago on the history of the letter which the Centralia coal miners sent him more than a year ago pleading with him, as their Governor, to "please save our lives."

The Governor's performance at this press conference was both pitiful and damning. When asked by a reporter for the Chicago Sun what he did with the letter—three of whose four signers are among the mine dead—Gov. Green said he turned it over to the Department of Mines, whose head is Robert M. Medill, his own appointee. Then he said: "As far as my office was concerned that seemed to end it right there."

The reporter pursued the history of the letter, as any good reporter would have done. Had the Governor's office followed up the complaints of the explosion hazard? Said the twice-elected chief executive of Illinois:

"There is no further record in my office."

As for the 57 instances of safety regulation violation, reported by the Federal Bureau of Mines, Gov. Green said: "I don't know. I don't know anything about them. You had better investigate the record."

Since Gov. Green has now declared that as soon as the bodies are removed he will have the mine closed for a state investigation, it is in order to suggest aspects of the tragedy to be looked into. Here is one line of inquiry which we propose that Gov. Green handle himself:

Let him find out first hand whether the Centralia Coal Co. contributed to the Chicago mayoral election fund shakedown which his Department of Mines was engaged in hot and heavy two weeks ago.

Let him call in W. P. Young, who is operating vice president of the company which felt free to ignore the warnings of the inspector.

Let the Governor ask Mr. Young, who happens also to be president of the allied Bell and Zoller Coal and Mining Co., with corporate headquarters in Chicago, whether he kicked in for the operators of the mine.

Let the Governor get the facts and tell them to the mourning families of the victims. This shakedown discredited the entire inspection service and Dwight Green knows it. He knows that it put his Department of Mines under obligation to the coal operators. He knows that one of the results would be official winking at state mine law enforcement. Yet Gov. Green has the effrontery to say he had only one complaint against the shakedown!

Post-Dispatch reporters have asked whether the Centralia Coal Co. contributed to the political fund and, if so, how much? They have found no one who is willing to talk about it. Gov. Green is the man to find out. He wants an investigation—now. There is no better way for him to begin than by bringing into the open the tie-up between politics and the death of more than 100 men, 650 feet underground.

The survivors at Centralia are entitled to the facts. They have already had too tragic much of buckpassing.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 22

A Public Employe Looks at Centralia

The Mirror of Public Opinion

The Centralia tragedy, which cost lives of 111 miners, tied in with political misuse of state inspection force, labor leader says; the shakedown for campaign funds shows need for genuine civil service status for inspectors; Illinois case is a warning for the whole nation.

Arnold S. Zander, President of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employes (AFL), in the Public Employee Magazine

Inspectors of the Illinois State Department of Mines and Minerals are political appointees. They get their jobs because they stand right with the party. They keep their jobs by running political errands and by gathering political contributions from mine owners and operators.

The inspectors were busy soliciting funds from the mine owners and operators to help finance the campaign of the party's candidate for Mayor of Chicago.

More than 100 men died, but indications are that the party did as well as might have been expected.

We now have the usual spectacle of a series of investigations. Let everyone remember that all these investigations will not restore one single life. Let everyone know, too, that an evil system, the political spoils system, is to blame.

The inspection of mines and the enforcement of safety regulations is neither a Republican nor a Democratic undertaking. For United States Senators, Governors, and their political colleagues to make of mine inspection a partisan political instrument is to invite disaster.

Inspectors or Collectors?

Let these men in high places who now want to find out how the fatal charge was ignited explain why their mine inspectors were busy soliciting party funds from mine owners rather than forcing compliance with safety regulations.

If lacking excuses, let them take steps to see that the Illinois state service, not only the Department of Mines and Minerals, is freed from political connivery and manipulation, and is allowed to function for the benefit of those who go down into the ground to mine our coal and on behalf of all the rest of us who depend for our safety and our health on workers employed in public departments.

The shooting of President Garfield by a disgruntled office seeker gave us our federal civil service system. Let the death of these miners in Centralia give needed support to civil service in Illinois, in Chicago and in the rest of the states and cities of the country.

The daily press reported that the head of the inspectors "admitted his inspectors had solicited funds from the mine owners." It is further stated that "he made no accounting of the funds collected nor of the success of their efforts to raise money among downstate mine owners."

Let Illinois select mine inspectors because they are qualified and fit and not because of their party regularity and their ability to gather campaign contributions from mine owners who find it cheaper to give to the party than to keep their mines safe.

An Exploited Bureaucracy

There is much evil in state and local government. It is brought out in bold relief by the March 25 tragedy at Centralia. It does not spring from the fact that the state has a responsibility to inspect mines and keep them safe or from the fact that it has established a department for this purpose which is part of our bureaucracy.

It springs from the fact that bureaucracy is not allowed to function freely and effectively but is exploited by men in high public office who criticize bureaucracy while they prostitute the whole idea of government to their own ends.

We honor politicians for the necessary tasks they perform in the political arena. But let them stay out of department administration, for when they come in on a partisan basis as they did in the Department of Mines and Minerals they corrupt not only the department but themselves.

A cry to be heard throughout the land should go up from Centralia to put every state employe of Illinois under civil service and to free from graft the administrative machinery of government. Let mine inspectors inspect, let enforcement agencies enforce, let state employes function without consideration of the partisan political implications of their acts. Let them devote themselves to work and not to solicitation of campaign contributions.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 13

The Anomaly of Mr. Weir's Job

Why is Robert Weir being kept on as Assistant Director of the Illinois State Department of Mines?

Mr. Weir is part and parcel of the coal mine operator-politician setup headed by Robert M. Medill at the time of the disaster at Centralia, which cost 111 miners their lives.

In fact, Mr. Weir is a former boss of the very mine in which the explosion occurred. He was on the whitewash investigating commission which took a quick look in the mine last year and found insufficient evidence to support Inspector Scanlan's findings of serious violations of mine safety.

Mr. Weir's conduct was specifically protested by the miners' union, when its members wrote the tragically prophetic letter to Gov. Green begging him to "please save our lives."

It cannot be argued that such a man is needed to orientate the interim director, Prof. Harold L. Walker of the University of Illinois. Such an Assistant Director is an obvious embarrassment to a non-political director.

Gov. Green should have dismissed Mr. Weir along with "Dear Bob" Medill. Since he failed to do it then, he should do it now.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 10

Case for U. S. Enforcement

How utterly unconcerned Gov. Green's coal operator-owned State Department of Mines was as to whether Illinois miners lived or were killed is being made starkly clear at the Cassidy commission's investigation in Springfield.

Consider this sequence, as reported from the record yesterday by the Post-Dispatch's staff correspondent, Roy J. Harris:

1. As a last resort the miners' union at the Centralia Coal Co., on March 3, 1946, send a personal letter to Gov. Green begging him to "please save our lives."

2. The miners receive a letter with Gov. Green's name signed to it. This is notwithstanding the fact that the Governor says he did not see the original letter. In any event, the Governor's answer says the miners' complaints will receive "full and complete consideration by the Mining Board."

3. John W. Chapman, Gov. Green's secretary, sends a letter to Robert M. Medill, then State Director of Mines, saying: "It is my opinion that the Governor may be subject to very severe criticism in the event that the facts complained of are true and that as a result of this condition some serious accident occurs at the mine."

4. Assistant Director Weir is not informed of the letter and the Mining Board, so two of its four members subsequently testify, is not advised of its existence.

5. Nothing is done by Gov. Green, his Department of Mines or the Mining Board, until the present investigation. Meantime, the Centralia mine explodes, as Mine Inspector Scanlan repeatedly warned it would, 142 miners are trapped and only 31 escape with their lives.

No wonder both branches of Congress yesterday heard demands for federal enforcement of mine safety.

No wonder Senator Morse of Oregon came out for a federal law "to place criminal responsibility" for unsafe mines on owners.

No wonder Representative Price of the district in which the disaster occurred called for teeth for the federal inspection code.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 1

State's Attorney Hohlt's Grave Duty

No man in Illinois today has a more important duty than Wilbert J. Hohlt, State's Attorney of Washington County, Ill. Since the Centralia mine explosion occurred under his county, he is responsible for the local investigation and prosecution of those who gambled with the lives of 111 miners—and lost the gamble.

Mr. Hohlt cannot afford to run the risk of having his hands tied by serving on Gov. Green belated state investigating commission. He should keep himself free from and high above all political connections and considerations.

If Mr. Hohlt needs an example, he has to look no further than the foursquare figure of State Mine Inspector Driscoll Scanlan, who refused to go along with Director Medill's political shakedown of coal operators.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 3

As the Senators Begin

Two United States Senators are in Centralia today to open the investigation of the Senate Public Lands Subcommittee into the mine disaster. They are Cordon of Oregon, a Republican, and O'Mahoney of Wyoming, a Democrat. At the same time, Secretary Krug has taken the sweeping action of closing 518 mines over the country for safety reasons.

For two days the state commission, headed by John E. Cassidy, former Illinois Attorney General, has been taking testimony. The Illinois Senate yesterday ordered its own investigation. In a few days the Washington County grand jury will be assembling its information. Thus, are the investigating and law enforcing agencies of nation, state and county marshalling their forces in the wake of failure of state mine safety in Illinois.

Long before the Centralia mine disaster, the Post-Dispatch called for the strengthening of federal mine inspection so as to provide real teeth for its enforcement. We renew that position now.

If ever a man stood justified in a campaign on a national scale, John L. Lewis, UMWA president, stands justified in his efforts for nation-wide mine safety. The wanton sacrifice of 111 lives in Southern Illinois is tragic confirmation of his bill of particulars against politics-ridden state inspection and enforcement.

Testimony before the belated investigating commission appointed by Gov. Green, printed in the Post-Dispatch yesterday, brought out the fact that the management of the mine was well aware of its long-continued violations of state mine safety laws, but did not make corrections because it did not wish to spend the required money.

The Bell & Zoller coal companies formed a million-dollar corporate organization and yet they could not afford the relatively small outlay necessary to keep Mine No. 5 at Centralia from being a death trap for the men who dug its coal!

What was wrong is that the operating head of the companies, William P. Young, who knew all about the condition of the mine, was not forced by the State of Illinois either to spend the money or to close the mine. Here was where state enforcement of a model safety state law, compromised by a patronage system and Gov. Green's political fund shakedown, collapsed. Here also is where federal enforcement inevitably comes in.

To this end, Representative Landis of Indiana, also a coal-producing state, is sponsoring a bill to put teeth in the federal law. It should be checked and double-checked. John L. Lewis among others should study it. Federal enforcement should be on the job whether the mines are run by their owners or are temporarily in government hands.

Failure to observe safety rules in mines has been so general that "only two or three mines," so Edwin A. Lahey reports, out of approximately 2000 checked by federal inspectors were found in full compliance with federal safety requirements. In the face of this, the Federal Coal Mine Administrator, Capt. Collisson, relied on "moral suasion" to convince operators of the need for adherence to safe standards.

This does not excuse the shockingly negligent state officials in the least. Indeed, it only points up their failure. Such men as Dwight H. Green, Robert M. Medill and William P. Young are the ones who invite federal enforcement into what has been a state field.

Had they and their kind done their duty, no demand for federal enforcement would arise. They defaulted and their default makes it mandatory that others provide the protection which was their responsibility and within their power.

The Centralia mine disaster should be the last tragedy of that sort in Illinois—or any other state.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 28

Whose Guilt?

The blood of the men who lost their lives in the mine disaster at Centralia is on the hands of the mine operators who continued to run the mine in the face of repeated warnings of an "explosion hazard." It is also on the Illinois State Department of Mines whose inspectors have authority to close mines which do not comply with safety requirements.

Staff Correspondent Harry Wilensky's on-the-ground investigation shows that a warning of excessive dust in the mine was dated as long ago as Dec. 13, 1945. The most recent notice was posted just a week ago when the mine inspector directed that "recommendations of previous inspections, not complied with, should be complied with."

Why was this mine permitted to operate in the face of these warnings? The Centralia Coal Co. knew the hazard existed. If it did not care sufficiently for the safety of its employes to shut down while the dangerous conditions were corrected, the authority of the state should have compelled its closing. Inspection service is of little value if its findings are not enforced. Indeed, there is a false security in such a situation; miners think their lives are being protected when such is not the fact.

This tragedy makes all the more despicable Gov. Green's use of the state mine inspecting force to shake down mine operators for donations to the Republican campaign in the Chicago mayoral race. No mine inspector should be placed in the position of soliciting a favor from any mine operator. Director Medill's State Mine Department cannot put itself in politics without compromising the enforcement of its inspection service.

Gov. Green cannot bring back the lives of the entombed. He cannot comfort the grief-stricken survivors. But there is one thing he can do: He can find out why this mine was not closed in accordance with repeated warnings. And he can contemplate the consequences of tying an inspection service into politics in such a way as to wink at non-enforcement of safety requirements.

Gov. Green shrugged off queries about the shakedown when the Post-Dispatch disclosed it a week ago. He cannot shrug off the mass death of these miners 540 feet underground.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 6

Gov. Green Fails Again

Gov. Green's special message on the mine disaster, which was read to both branches of the Illinois Legislature, is good so far as it goes but that, in all candor, is hardly any place at all.

No one should know this better than the Governor himself.

In order to be entirely fair to him, let's check over his message and see just what he did say in his 10 brief paragraphs. If the man who appointed Robert M. Medill to direct his Department of Mines rose to the occasion, it will come out as we digest his report to the horror-struck legislators.

First, he says the loss of 111 lives at Centralia was "one of the worst disasters in the history of our state." No one will dissent from that.

He says, second, that it is "a proper concern of all that everything humanly possible be done to lessen the tremendous burden of grief which the families of the victims must bear." Again, complete agreement with the Governor's words.

Then, he states what amounts to a four-point program, as follows:

1. Financial and other aid for the mourning families.

2. Investigation by a special state commission into "every phase of the disaster."

3. State reinspection of all Illinois mines and the closing of all "without adequate protection for the miners."

4. Legislative action to determine whether aid is adequate and "to fix the cause of the tragedy and the responsibility therefor."

Finally, he emphasizes "the present division of mine inspection authority between the federal and state governments" and in passing refers generally to "such legislation as may be required to insure the safety of those engaged in mining in Illinois."

Where this message falls down is that it contents itself with saying only the things which obviously had to be said.

There is not one single word which comes to grips with the specific, sharply enumerated failures of state administration, under Gov. Green's own direction. There is not a word of which the Legislature can say: "This represents executive leadership."

The Governor fails to ask the Legislature to take steps to remove the State Department of Mines from patronage politics and to protect its inspectors by strict civil service.

Apparently, it still suits Gov. Green that in order to be a mine inspector a candidate must have the sponsorship of local and county political organizations. Apparently, it still is all right with him that when an inspector as honest and diligent as Driscoll Scanlan comes along and warns repeatedly of danger, he can be insulted by his superior with the sneering remark: "You're just too damned honest."

Gov. Green makes no reference whatever to outlawing the political shakedown through which his Department of Mines was compromising its own inspection by getting "voluntary" contributions from the operators. Apparently, the Governor still sees nothing wrong with this, as he assured the Post-Dispatch he did not when it interviewed him about the shakedown just a week before the explosion.

Did Dwight Green draft Prof. Harold Leroy Walker, University of Illinois mining engineer, as interim director in place of the fired Medill, without giving orders against the shakedown and for a non-political Department of Mines? If so, he showed no regard for the professional reputation of Prof. Walker. The only condition on which Prof. Walker should stay, even temporarily, is that Gov. Green should come clean on these vital reforms.

What if it does mean admission of wrongdoing on his part? What is an admission like that in the face of the wanton waste of 111 lives?

What a far cry it is from the little man in Springfield (when he is there) to Governors of Illinois like Charles Deneen and Frank O. Lowden, Henry Horner and John Peter Altgeld!

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 7

Sound Proposals for Mine Safety

Notwithstanding Gov. Green's failure to mention either civil service for Illinois mine inspectors or outlawry of political shakedowns, introduction of bills at Springfield to achieve these urgent ends is now assured.

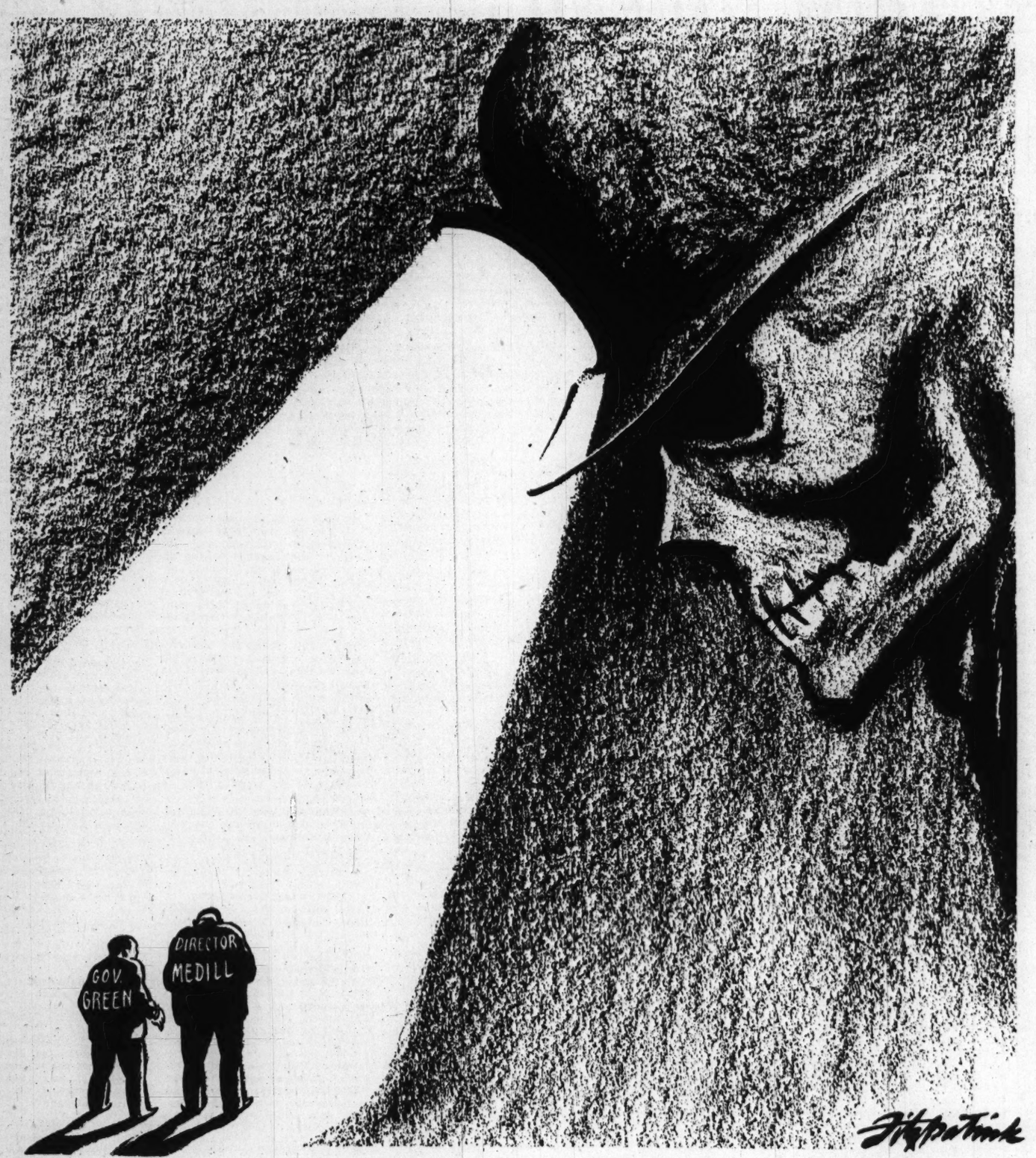
Representative Paul Powell of Vienna, House Democratic leader, has told the Post-Dispatch that he is drafting a bill to make it a penal offense for any state employe having supervision over industries or exercising any kind of police power to solicit contributions. A companion bill to take the State Department of Mines out of politics is also to be drawn.

It is unfortunate that Gov. Green and his Republican leaders in the Legislature failed to take the lead in this obvious need. This made it necessary for the Democrats to act. The rank and file of Representatives and Senators at Springfield surely will not permit the issue of mine safety to become embroiled in party politics. They certainly place a higher value on the sacrifice of 111 lives than that!

Both these proposals deserve careful execution. Illinois is one of two states without a corrupt practices law. The bill to outlaw the shakedown or lug should be broadly drawn. It should protect all state employes from all political solicitation. The divorcement of the State Mines Department from politics should be a model for similar divorcement of other c de departments.

As for the announcement of the minority members of the legislative investigating committee that they will insist that Gov. Green be subpenaed, the Governor should go voluntarily before the committee and permit it to ask him any questions it desires. He told the state investigators to "pull no punches." In the matter of his own relations with Robert M. Medill, politics in the Mines Department, the shakedown and the now historic letter of the miners asking the Governor to "please save our lives," it should be unnecessary for the investigators even to reach for him.

Gov. Green should be one of the first witnesses at the Springfield hearing and he should be there without being brought in by subpena.



Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 1

"ONE, TWO, _____"

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 31

Gov. Green and Director Medill

No one can question for a moment who is responsible for the loss of 111 lives in the Centralia Coal Co. mine at Wamac, Ill., after reading the Post-Dispatch interview with Driscoll Scanlan, mine inspector, today.

The men primarily responsible are Robert M. Medill, Illinois State Director of Mines, and the Governor who appointed him, and who failed to require him to enforce the law, Dwight H. Green.

After completing the removal of the bodies of the victims yesterday, Inspector Scanlan, who courageously led the rescue work under conditions of extreme hazard, told the whole sordid story of the Green Admimstration's undercutting of its mine inspection service by making it a campaign shakedown force in the coal fields.

Inspector Scanlan objected to this prostitution of the inspection staff as placing the Department of Mines under obligation to the favor-buying coal operators and making it even more difficult to obtain compliance with Illinois's model mine safety law.

Even though he was part of a political setup, Driscoll Scanlan protested at compromising his work as an inspector, in which the miners had confidence, with the political shakedown. When Director Medill called the inspectors to Springfield and told them the department's quota was $25,000, Scanlan rebelled. He pleaded the cause of safety, as the union had done nearly a year earlier personally to Gov. Green.

That didn't move Director Medill, any more than the miners' letter—the letter from the mine dead-to-be—moved Gov. Green. Medill told Inspector Scanlan he was "just too damned honest." Still Inspector Scanlan would not take part in the shakedown.

All his efforts to have the mine closed were compromised the same way. He told the Post-Dispatch that he repeatedly asked Medill's department to close the mine and that the department would not back him up. He said that in 1945 he went out of his district to see Medill at Belleville and told the director there would be an explosion if the mine was not closed. Medill, he said, told him that "we'll just have to take that chance."

That chance was taken and as a result 111 funerals are being held in Centralia, Wamac and Sandoval.

This is not to palliate, in any sense, the operators of the Centralia Coal Co. or the Federal Coal Mines Administrator who failed to do their duty in enforcing safety regulations. But no other failures elsewhere can relieve Gov. Green and Director Medill of their responsibility.

Gov. Green routinely sent the miners' letter to Medill and forgot about it. He said the shakedown was voluntary and that anyway he had had only one complaint. And his Director of Mines told Inspector Scanlon he was "just too damned honest"!

The tragedy is that men of Driscoll Scanlon's courage and stamina and humanity were not in these high offices in Springfield.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 7

A Spotlight on the Guilty

The Mirror of Public Opinion

Those primarily responsible for the Centralia coal mine disaster are feverishly passing the buck, editorial says; blames Illinois politicians and the mine operators; says that "the people should demand that everyone who contributed to this massacre be properly punished."

From the St. Louis Labor Tribune

The wanton, preventable holocaust at Mine No. 5 of the Centralia Coal Co., which claimed the lives of 111 union miners of this Illinois coal mine, was caused by the lowest form of political depravity.

Those primarily responsible, the politicians, the mine management and ownership, are now feverishly engaged in passing the buck, and it is likely that the seven-man fact-finding commission named by Gov. Dwight Green of Illinois will dig up the usual whitewash to mitigate one of the blackest episodes in industrial history.

Gov. Green.

Everyone in authority and responsibility had a specific foreknowledge that this mine was as unsafe as any coal mine could be. The federal and state mine inspectors knew it; Robert M. Medill, director of the Illinois State Department of Mines and Minerals, knew it; Gov. Green knew it; Secretary of Interior Julius Krug knew it.

Tin Cup and a Blackjack

One year previously, the men who worked in the mines figuratively got down on their knees and humbly implored these responsible public officials to correct the dangerous conditions they knew sooner or later would snuff out their lives. Yet nothing was done to correct it. Why?

Well, there was a political campaign going on. State mine inspectors were ordered to put the bite on the coal operators for campaign funds for the Republican party in Chicago, and Gov. Green allegedly set that quota at $25,000. Naturally, these callous political hacks, with a tin cup in one hand and a blackjack in the other, did nothing to offend the mine operators by making them spend a substantial sum to make their mines safe according to the minimum legal requirements.

The United States Department of Interior is less culpable than the state to the degree that the federal mine inspection law does not provide compliance. (The Krug-Lewis agreement, however, does provide compliance—Editor's note.) All that the federal mine inspectors can do under the act is to report the unsafe conditions.

That joker also was the result of mephitic politics, because the coal operators put pressure on business-first Congressmen thus to emasculate an otherwise good law. But that prohibition did not stand in the way of state enforcement.

"This Criminal Neglect"

Well, 111 men died like rats in a fiery furnace because of this criminal neglect. All of those concerned, from the Congressmen who voted to pull the teeth out of the federal mine inspection law, to the Republican Illinois politicians and the mine operators can Pilate-like wash their hands for the next million years and never erase a drop of the blood guilt they bear because of their neglect.

That part of public opinion which still has conscience should see to it that we do not have a recurrence of such preventable disasters. The people should demand that everyone who by their sins of omission, contributed to this massacre, including the political charlatans, be properly punished.

Throw the spotlight of pitiless publicity upon all of them.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 21

Where Mr. Weir Was Boss

It has been pointed out that the Post-Dispatch described Robert Weir, Assistant Director of the Illinois State Department of Mines, as a boss in the mine in which the Centralia coal dust explosion occurred. This is an error which grew out of the statement in the mine union's letter to Gov. Green that Mr. Weir was "a boss of the Centralia Coal Co." We are advised that he was a boss in the same company's mine at nearby Zeigler.

We are glad to enter this correction for any difference it may make. The criticism of Mr. Weir stands: he is part and parcel of the coal mine operator-politician setup formerly headed by "Dear Bob" Medill. He was no more active in enforcing mine safety for having been stationed by his danger-callous company at Zeigler than he would have been at Centralia. Interim Director Walker should do what Gov. Green did not do. He should dismiss Robert Weir.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 20

Shakedown in Illinois

Gov. Green and his Director of the Illinois State Department of Mines, Robert M. Medill, express surprise at the Post-Dispatch's investigation of the Green organization's shakedown of Illinois mine operators for the benefit of the Republican mayoral race in Chicago.

They see nothing wrong in soliciting these industrialists for campaign contributions, even though they use state mine inspectors to put on the squeeze. Anyway, they say, the solicitation is on a voluntary basis, and if anything is out of order, they will investigate.

A lot is out of order. Had not Louis F. Lumaghi Jr. of St. Louis, who operates a mine at Collinsville, refused the suggested $500 contribution and made public his forthright letter of refusal, this particular extortion probably would not have come to light. The public would not have known about the shakedown or the favor-seeking mine operators who fell a victim to it.

What Gov. Green thinks is all right, all states except Illinois and Rhode Island have outlawed. The Illinois Legislature is in session. It should show the Illinois Governor what is wrong by passing a state corrupt practices law. Such a law will not be self-enforcing, but it will put the name of the people of Illinois on record against political shakedowns of business and it will give support to men like Louis F. Lumaghi who are not afraid to hit a venal political practice when it comes along.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of March 28

Centralia's Task

The bodies of all the victims in the Centralia mine disaster are not yet brought up to their mourning families. Even so, it is already evident that the grim duty of holding the guilty to answer for their outrageous negligence rests with the grief-stricken survivors.

Centralia must bury its dead and then be the motive force as well as the seat of the investigation.

Can Centralia count on the Illinois State Department of Mines and its director, Robert M. Medill, to see that responsibility is so fixed that it cannot be escaped? Obviously not. Director Medill and his department were asked time and again by the men who dug the coal in this mine to enforce the state mining laws against violations shown repeatedly by Mr. Medill's own inspector.

Can Centralia count on Gov. Green? The answer is just as clearly No. Never has an executive had a coming mine explosion more prophetically laid on his desk a year in advance. Gov. Green was warned. He was pleaded with personally by the miners "to save our lives." Three of the four committee members who signed the letter on behalf of the UMWA local are among the dead.

Can Centralia count on Senator Brooks? Again the answer is No. He is already engaged in the despicable business of trying to whitewash the negligent state officials. An errand boy for the boss of the Republican party in Illinois, Robert R. McCormick, publisher of the Chicago Tribune, Senator Brooks seeks to hang responsibility on federal authorities, particularly on Secretary Krug, since the Department of the Interior is still in technical control of the mines. Everyone knows that this federal operation is only nominal—that mine operators continue to run the mines and state responsibility for safety remains. No, Centralia cannot count on a political dodger like "Curly" Brooks.

Nor can Centralia count on such a Senator as Capehart of the neighboring coal state of Indiana. He comes up with the ridiculous argument that this disaster shows the undesirability of federal regulation of mines. What the tragedy of Centralia shows is the need of more not less regulation. If ever there was a loss of life which demonstrated the need for honest enforcement of law, for forthright doing of official duty, it is the shocking loss at Centralia Coal Co. Mine No. 5.

Centralia would be unwise to rely too much on the Illinois Legislature at Springfield, even though one of its members shows some of the feeling there by proposing the possibility of Gov. Green's impeachment.

Centralia must and should rely on itself. The grand jury of its county meets in a few days. It is the body to search the law books, to fix responsibility, to bring indictments, to insist on a proper drawing of charges, to stand above all political considerations.

Centralia cannot bring back to life a single one of its dead. But it can make such national example of the weak, unconcerned, indifferent officials and mine operators who are responsible that no such disaster will occur again.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 11

What Candidate Green Told Miners

In 1940, when Dwight H. Green wanted to be Governor he addressed a political campaign appeal "to the coal miners of Illinois" from his "downstate labor headquarters." This appeal for the miners' support read, in part, as follows:

> The lives of you men have been entrusted to the state. The only security you have depends upon absolute enforcement of these laws. To that end, an investigation of why these laws have not been enforced should be made now before a tragedy shocks the nation and before we may be called upon again to behold that silent line of loved ones, crowded at the mouth of some mine, dreading the evidence of loss that will be brought up from below.
>
> The shot-firers' law requires that no blasting of coal shall be permitted in a mine until all workmen have left the mine, not to return until after an investigation has been made following explosion of the shots.
>
> I pledge to you that this law and all other laws protecting the same health, safety and lives of the men employed in the mines will be enforced rigidly and thoroughly. In other words, TO THE LETTER OF THE LAW.
>
> Sincerely,
> DWIGHT H. GREEN.

In other words, the man who wanted to be Governor forgot all about mine safety after he was elected. He put a coal mine executive-politician in as his Director of Mines. He countenanced the political shakedown through the mine inspection force. He failed to protect miners even though they appealed to him direct.

And when, "that silent line of loved ones" formed at Centralia Coal Co. Mine No. 5, he said nothing about the safety of the miners' being "entrusted to the state," but pointed out that the mines were under "federal control."

MINE DID NOTHING TO END HAZARDS BECAUSE OF COST, FOREMAN TELLS PROBERS

INSPECTORS HAD COMPLAINED OF DUST FOR 5 YEARS, WITNESS ADMITS

Considered Cost---in Money, Not Lives

Warning of Law Violation on Air Supply Only a Week Before Blast at Centralia That Killed 111 Men.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 2

By HARRY WILENSKY
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 2—The management of Centralia Coal Co. Mine No. 5, where 111 miners lost their lives last week, knew it was violating state mine safety laws, but did not improve conditions in the mine because such improvements would cost too much, William H. Brown, underground foreman, testified yesterday before the Governor's fact-finding commission.

Both state and federal mine inspectors had been complaining of the mine's dust hazard for about five years, Brown said. "I must admit dust does increase the hazard of an explosion," he added.

He admitted that "nothing was done to minimize the hazard of dust." Inspectors had recommended the installation of a sprinkling system for this purpose.

"We honestly didn't think it was economical for our mine," Brown said.

"You mean you didn't wish to bear the expense?" he was asked.

"That's right," Brown answered.

"Is that the only reason you didn't install it?"

"Yes," he said.

Foreman Lacked Authority.

Brown said he did not have the authority to order installation of a sprinkling system. Vice president and operating head of the Centralia Coal Co., a $400,000 corporation, is W. P. Young of Chicago, who is president of the associated Bell & Zoller Coal Mining Corp., a $1,000,000 corporation.

Young has been called to testify before the fact-finding committee tonight.

Illinois mining laws require that a mine be ventilated in such a way as to provide a separate current of air for every 100 men at work. The Centralia mine management knew it was violating this law, Brown testified. State Mine Inspector Driscoll Scanlan called it to the foreman's attention, the last time, only a week before the explosion which swept through the mine.

The mine ventilating system provides only one current of air, yet the practice at the mine was to employ more than 100 men underground. The day of the explosion 143 men were working on a single level, 540 feet below the surface.

"Did you realize this was a violation," Brown was asked by James Sneddon, inspector-at-large of the State Department of Mines and Minerals.

"Yes," Brown admitted.

"The inspector had brought it to your attention?"

"Yes," Brown said, again.

"A week before the explosion?"

"Yes," said Brown.

Section 14.2 of the Illinois mining laws (revised edition, July, 1945) reads: "The main current of air shall be so split or subdivided as to give a separate current of reasonably pure air to every 100 men at work, and the inspector shall have authority to order, in writing, separate currents for smaller groups of men, if, in his judgment, special conditions render it necessary."

Foreman One of Survivors.

Brown was one of the 21 survivors of the mine explosion last week, which he said may have been caused by "someone prematurely and accidentally exploding a quantity of powder," which ignited the coal dust in the mine.

Members of the fact-finding commission adjourned the hearings at the Pittinger Hotel long enough today to make a personal inspection trip inside the mine. The trip had been planned for yesterday, but was postponed until monoxide gas had been further cleared from the mine.

Thinks It Was Dust Explosion.

When the group returned from their trip inside the mine, John E. Jones, one of the commission members, declared "there is no question in my mind but that it was a dust explosion," in which the 111 miners died last week. Dust could have been detonated, he said, by a smaller methane (fire damp) gas explosion, by a blasting operation or from an electric arc or open flame.

Of the three possible causes, he said, detonation of dust clouds by the use of explosives in the mine was most likely. Jones added, however, that the cause of the disaster "is more mysterious now than it ever was."

Damage to the structure of the mine passages was not particularly great, he said. Jones said it was "fortunate" that a mine fire did not follow the explosion, "as usually happens in these cases."

John E. Cassidy, commission chairman, did not accompany the other members on the inspection tour. He said he would arrange for hearings to be resumed late today. He said he planned to call as witnesses two state inspectors, five federal inspectors and two mine examiners employed by the Centralia Coal Co., who made an inspection of the mine before the commission members made their tour.

Robert M. Medill, who resigned yesterday as director of the Illinois Department of Mines and Minerals, has been called to testify before the commission tomorrow.

Other witnesses, Cassidy said, will include Walter Johnson, general superintendent of the mine, and other mine officials. He said a night session would be held tonight and that he hoped to complete the hearings tomorrow, and to file a report early next week.

Brown, whose testimony was given late yesterday, had been accused in 1945, with Norman Prudent, then superintendent of the mine, of operating the Centralia Coal Co. Mine No. 5 in violation of state safety laws. The accusation was by workers in the mine, who requested revocation of their certificates.

A commission appointed by Medill had found insufficient evidence to warrant such action.

"Mine Coal as God Left It."

Brown testified yesterday that the dusty condition of the mine "always has existed. We mine coal as God left it. No. 5 is a dry mine."

The foreman explained the company had planned to pipe water into the mine and use hose to spray parts of cutting and loading machines, which were ignition danger points. He called it "another tragedy" that "material for sprinkling hasn't arrived. Pipe was supposed to be ordered to lay the dust. I was told last fall it had been ordered."

The foreman, who frequently resorted to the big map of the mine hung on the wall of the meeting room, said it was his job "to take care of all things that come within my range."

"I mean within reasonable limits," he added. "I couldn't say to spend $100,000."

"How much is your range?" the witness was pressed.

"I don't know."

"Does the installation of a sprinkling system to treat dust fall within your range?"

"No, sir."

Scanlan's Cleanup Order.

Brown reported that State Mine Inspector Scanlan had ordered the mine in April 1945 to work no more than four days a week and to clean up the dust on the other three days "until he was satisfied" the dust hazard had been alleviated.

"As I recall," Brown said, "we cleaned roads (haulage roadways) a whole week, and then for two or three weeks operated only four days a week before he was satisfied."

Brown, gesturing from time to time with the cigarette in his hand, expressed the opinion that three of the seven crews at work in the mine last Tuesday, and part of a fourth, had died from suffocation rather than directly from the blast itself.

"Coal dust when exploded can produce carbon monoxide," he explained. "If enough rock dust were thrown up in a blast, it would reduce the combustibility of the coal dust."

Brown said, "We try to redust the whole mine every year," and the most recent dusting was finished about last July or August. He estimated that rock dust in the mine last Tuesday was 400 to 500 feet back from the cutting faces (walls from which coal was being cut). The Federal Bureau of Mines recommends that rock dust be laid to a point 80 feet from all working faces.

The state classified Mine No. 5 as a non-gaseous mine, it was brought out, while the Federal Bureau of Mines, using more exacting standards involving laboratory analysis of air and dust samples, considered it gaseous and recommended use of inclosed lamps instead of the open carbide lamps which the miners wore on their caps.

Brown, in expressing the opinion that the explosion might have been ignited by a powder blast, offered the alternative explanation that it might have been caused by the use of open lamps—in violation of the Federal Bureau of Mines recommendation. The contract between the coal mine's administration and the miners calls for use of the inclosed lamps.

A committee representing the miners in a letter to Gov. Green March 3, 1946, expressed fear of a dust explosion and begged Green to "please save our lives," by making the State Department of Mines enforce safety regulations.

Brown contended the dust complained of by the miners in their letter was not the type of dust involved in spreading the explosion. Dust in haulage roadways is more inert — being combined with sandlike material—than dust at the working faces, and it was the latter that propagated the blast, he asserted.

"So help me, God, I wish what the men had complained of in the letter had been the cause of the blast," the foreman exclaimed. "It might have saved the men." Had it been the coal dust mixed with grit in the roads, the explosion would not have swept the mine, he meant.

After leaving the stand, he remarked, "I have a terrible consciousness of guilt about this."

Federal mine inspector Frank Perz, of Staunton, and State Inspector Scanlan told the Commission that the mine was less adequately rock-dusted during an inspection they made between last March 17 and March 20 than at any other time they had examined the mine. There was less coal dust two weeks ago, however, than on previous occasions, they reported.

"If the mine had been well rock-dusted, this explosion would not have happened," Scanlan asserted. "There can't be a dust explosion if a mine is properly rock-dusted."

He said the mine superintendent had told him he had spread rock dust throughout the entire mine to hold down coal dust in 1941 at a cost of $900.

Scanlan repeated many of the statements previously published in the Post-Dispatch regarding his recommendations and his relations with Medill.

He said he was on the point of resigning at one time, but was dissuaded by Tom Bush, then chairman of the local mine workers' union pit committee. Bush died in the explosion.

"Bush told me not to quit," Scanlan reported. "He said, 'you do hammer something out of them once in a while. You're about the best friend we ever had in the mine.'"

Scanlan praised some of the Centralia Coal Co. officials, including the mine examiners and Superintendent Johnson. Johnson, he said, was able and wished to operate a safe mine, but had not been superintendent long enough to correct the hazards, which dated back far beyond Johnson's employment.

Chairman Cassidy, former State Attorney General, pursued vigorously the question of why Scanlan had not ordered the mine closed. He was not satisfied with the inspector's answer that closing the mine would have cost him his job.

Finally, Scanlan reflected for a moment, and said, "If I had closed the mine, Director Medill would have sent someone here to reopen it."

In reply to a question whether any particularly hazardous conditions had existed at the mine last March 25 as compared with previous days, Scanlan said the reports of the two mine examiners employed by the company showed nothing unusual the day of the explosion.

U.S. Inspector's Testimony.

Perz, however, testified he found 60 violations of the federal code in his inspection of the mine last November and "numerous" violations in the last inspection, March 17-20. Reports made by Perz showed that 51 violations of the federal safety code had not been corrected five days before the explosion occurred.

On the final inspection, Perz testified, the mine was "very dry and dusty and apparently it had not been rock-dusted" as he had urged after previous inspections. Ventilation was bad, he said.

Perz also had found miners "igniting explosives with an open flame instead of an electric detonator." Although he considered conditions in the mine "hazardous," he said he had not believed the miners were in imminent danger.

"Violations could have been corrected during operations if the operators had taken action," Perz declared.

After each of his inspections, Perz continued, he had discussed his recommendations with Johnson, his assistant, Harry Niermann, and Brown, before sending his reports to Washington.

Hugh White, president of the Illinois United Mine Workers, was the first witness at last night's session. He read a section of the contract between the United Mine Workers and the Government which placed responsibility for enforcement of the provisions of the safety code on the coal mines administration.

"Secretary Krug failed to fulfill an obligation he signed his name he would carry out," White charged, "because there were numerous violations of the code at this mine. As a result, 111 lives were lost, leaving widows and orphan children at the mercy of the people of Illinois."

Protest Walkout Failed.

He admitted that he, personally, had not complained of conditions at the mine to the coal mines administration.

In explanation, he said, "Capt. N. H. Collison, the administrator, had told me, in connection with a refusal of miners to work at another mine in southern Illinois because of safety hazards, that the men were engaged in a wildcat strike and must return to work."

White, a member of the committee which negotiated the national contract, related some of the history of the signing of the contract. Harrison Combs, Washington, international counsel of the United Mine Workers, also discussed the history of the contract and the powers it gave the Federal Government.

"The Government can enforce the safety code by disciplining or removing the owner of the mine, who is acting as an agent of the Government," he told the commission.

He then read copies of correspondence between Perz, Capt. Collison and the Centralia Co. Perz's report of last Nov. 4-6 was called to the attention of the company in a letter from Capt. Collison last Nov. 26, Combs said.

Last Jan. 29, Capt. Collison again wrote the company, he continued, saying there had been no reply to the letter. On March 7, Capt. Collison in another letter to the company referred to an answer which finally had been received, reporting that "a number of recommendations now have been complied with."

Discussing the fact that the safety code was adopted last July 24, whereas the contract specified that it be promulgated by June 28, Combs said "Secretary Krug began the safety code by violating a section of the contract."

In reply to a question, he conceded that the violation was the failure to promulgate the code within the specified time limit.

Says Code Was Not Enforced.

He charged that Krug has not enforced the code as vigorously as he has prosecuted miners for engaging in wild cat strikes.

"Miners have been put in prison for striking," he asserted, "but the operators have only received letters when their mines are unsafe."

Because of the manner in which Krug and the coal mines administrator have administered the contract, and because of the recent Supreme Court decision upholding an injunction issued by a lower court, "the miners are not now in a position to quit work to protect themselves," Combs asserted.

William A. Gallagher, the federal mine inspector representing Krug on the commission, commented in reply, "If that is true, it is a sorry state of affairs. If those conditions exist, we haven't got a semblance of safety in the United States today."

He urged that the coal mines administrator be required to send a personal representative, instead of only a letter, when a mine is reported as unsafe.

W. Randall Compton, Washington, general counsel for the coal mines administration, who had been sitting at Gallagher's elbow prompting questions throughout the hearing, protested vigorously in whispers to Gallagher.

U.S. Counsel Gives Views.

After Scanlan and Perz had testified, Compton spoke, asserting that he felt he should testify in view of the statements of White and Combs.

He said that under his interpretation of the code, a federal inspector cannot close a mine on his own authority.

"However," Compton declared, "if there is imminent or serious danger, the inspector shall report by telephone to the director of the Bureau of Mines, who shall report to the coal mines administrator.

"The administrator may then order the men to leave the mine. There have been occasions when the administrator has done so, and the operators have been removed from some mines."

Compton turned so that he partly faced White, who was sitting behind him.

"If Mr. White has a letter from Krug threatening to invoke the Smith-Connally Act because miners left their jobs over safety conditions, I would like to see it," he said. "Under those circumstances, prosecution under the Smith-Connally Act is impossible."

White said nothing.

"The delay in the promulgation of the safety code was brought about by a personal decision by Secretary Krug that the first draft of the code was inconsistent with the primary duty of producing coal. Hence, the code had to be re-written," Compton said.

White, who had said in his previous testimony that the delay was a dispute over including regulations about miners' washhouses in the code, interrupted.

"Mr. Chairman," he began.

Compton said, "Mr. White, I didn't interrupt you when you were testifying. I would appreciate it if you wouldn't interrupt me."

"I'm addressing the chair, properly," White replied.

Cassidy told Compton to continue.

"I have nothing more to say," Compton, a smooth Eastern lawyer who spoke in a cultured voice, said.

White, a squat former coal miner, said, "Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask Mr. Compton a few questions."

Breaking in, Compton asserted, "I restrained myself from any attempt at cross-examination while you and Mr. Combs were testifying. Will you please do the same; If the chairman wishes, I shall answer Mr. White's questions, however."

Cassidy nodded to White.

"If the mine union safety committee, thinks a mine is unsafe, can the miners refuse to work?" White asked.

"It says so in the code," Compton replied. White asserted he had asked for a statement of fact, but Compton refused to say "yes."

Cassidy said that the point was not material, since the committee did not protest.

"Would construction of washhouses have interfered with production of coal?" White asked again.

"I am not a coal producer . . ." Compton began.

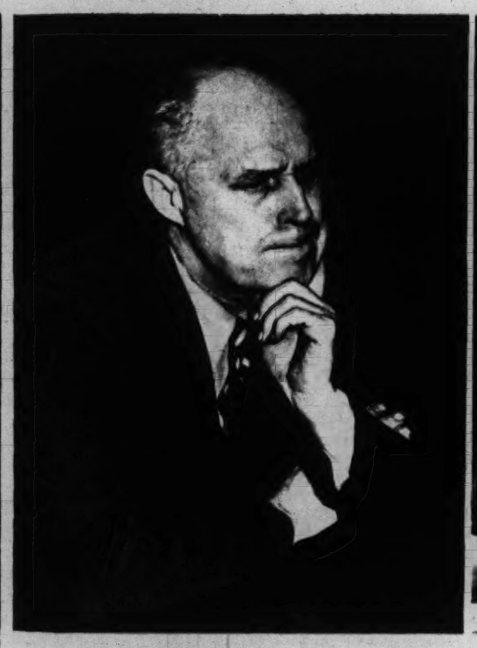
"Mr. Compton was not present when the contract was signed," White said, heatedly. "He doesn't know what commitments Krug made to us."

Cassidy then adjourned the hearing.

Witnesses were not sworn by the fact-finding commission and did not therefore testify under oath.

Members of the commission besides Cassidy and Sneddon are Oliver Bishop, representing the UMW; Washington county State's Attorney Wilbert J. Hohlt; Jones and Gallagher, representing Krug, and David H. Devonald, representing the coal operators.

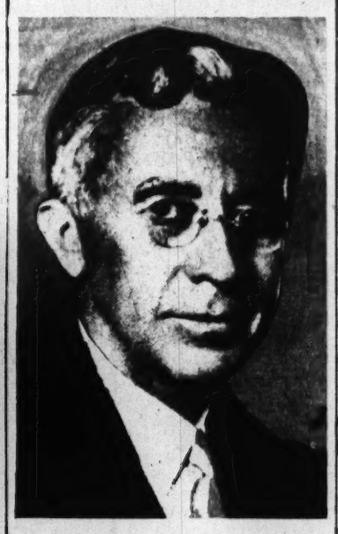
Members of the United States Senate subcommittee of the Public Lands Committee will begin its hearings on the mine disaster at the Centralia City Hall at 10 a.m. tomorrow. Members of the subcommittee are due to arrive tonight. They are Senators Cordon (Rep.), Oregon; Dworshak (Rep.), Idaho, and O'Mahoney (Dem.), Wyoming.



—By a Post-Dispatch Staff Photographer.

WILLIAM H. BROWN, left, underground foreman at the Centralia mine, who testified the mine management knew it was violating state mine safety laws, and WILLIAM P. YOUNG, right, operating head of the Centralia Coal Co., which, Brown said, decided safety compliance was not "economical."

Centralia's Mine's 80-Year-Old Chairman Unaware of Conditions



HERBERT E. BELL

Herbert E. Bell, Financial Backer of Coal Firms, Says He Knew Little of Operating Details.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 2

By a Special Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

PASADENA, Calif., April 2 — Herbert E. Bell, financial angel of the Bell & Zoller interests, which include the ill-fated Centralia mine where 111 miners died in an explosion last week, said at his home here today he knew little about the operations of the Centralia property.

The 80-year-old capitalist, chairman of the board of the Bell & Zoller Coal Mining Corp., the Bell & Zoller Coal Co. and the Centralia Coal Co., said that he owned only one share of stock in the Centralia Co. and had not been well acquainted with its operations for a number of years.

He said the Bell & Zoller Coal Mining Corp. did not own any of the Centralia stock which he said was vested in various officers of the principal Bell & Zoller concern. "Of course, I feel very deeply over this tragedy," he added, "it is a terrible thing."

When asked whether any of his coal-mining properties had made contributions to the campaign funds of Gov. Dwight H. Green at the solicitation of state mine inspectors, he replied, "Oh, I don't think so, I certainly don't think so."

The aged financier, who keeps a keen eye on his investments, celebrated his sixtieth anniversary in the coal business recently as his companies announced attainment of a total production mark of 150-million tons of Illinois coal.

His real start in coal came at about the turn of the century when the late James J. Hill commissioned him to buy up Illinois coal tonnage to supply Hill's growing railroad lines in the northwest.

Bell, who started out with a Chicago wholesale coal firm in 1887, organized the Bell & Zoller Co. in 1896, but its first attempt at direct operation didn't come until 1906 when it bought the Centralia Coal Co. Fourteen years later it leased and reopened the old Zeigler No. 1 mine in Franklin county and in 1918 developed another Zeigler mine there. For a short time it operated a mine at Peoria. Bell and Zoller mines currently produce four million tons of coal a year.

Distribution of its production is concentrated in Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska and Iowa.

Until comparatively recent years Bell functioned as the presiding genius of the organization he created. It has always had integrated control with few changes in key personnel. Most executives have risen from the ranks. There have been various changes in the financial alignment of some of the companies, but the elderly Bell has remained the dominant financial influence.

H. F. McDonald, president of the Bell & Zoller Coal Co., came up through the sales end. He was general sales manager before he became president after Bell became chairman of the board.

McDonald has admitted to the Post-Dispatch that, although he is federal agent for the mines, he had "no idea" what went on there and merely passed on official notifications of safety hazards found by federal mine inspectors to W. P. Young, operating head of the company. McDonald did not follow them up.

"Hell, I don't know anything about a coal mine," McDonald admitted. He said he handled the sales end and had full confidence in the operating abilities of Young, who has had more than 20 years of experience as a producer.

Others in the Bell & Zoller organization who came up through the ranks include C. W. Peterson, treasurer of the various companies which effectively function together regardless of corporate distinctions. He started in the general office. H. E. Baldwin, a director of the companies, has been one of Bell's aids on finances. In short, the mining concern has always been a tightly knit outfit with an avowed cleavage of operations between sales and production.

Bell & Zoller got its first real impetus in World War I when the coal market boomed. Its Illinois mines reputedly reaped a fortune. It did well, too, in the twenties. It flourished with the rest of the industry throughout World War II and in the reconversion period.

The Centralia mine, the Post-Dispatch learned, was abandoned on April 1, 1923, partly because it was regarded as a "high cost" mine from the standpoint of operating expenses in a competitive field. It was reopened in the fall of 1926, in time to reap the benefits of the British general strike.

Many of Bell's other interests stem from his coal mining properties. He formed and controls the Cardox Corp., a major outfit in the chemical industry. Its products include coal blasting and fire-fighting equipment.

Bell owns a 25-story office building in Chicago in which his companies have offices. He also founded the Skyline Club, an organization for Chicago executives. It is housed in a penthouse atop the Bell building.

ILLINOIS SENATE VOTES TO SET UP MINE INQUIRY BODY

Action Calls for 10-Man Legislative Committee to Study Laws, Cause of Blast.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 2

By ROY J. HARRIS
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., April 2—The Illinois State Senate by a vote of 43 to 0 adopted a resolution today calling for the creation of a 10-man legislative committee from both houses to investigate the Centralia mine disaster.

Under the resolution introduced yesterday by Senators R. G. Crisenberry (Rep.), Murphysboro; Ora Goldfield (Rep.), Centralia, and John W. Fribley (Dem.), Pana, the committee will be instructed to determine whether any laxity in enforcement of state mining laws or insufficiency in their provisions contributed to the castrophe. The measure was expected to go to the lower house for action today.

The Senate's action followed a special message by Gov. Dwight H. Green earlier today recommending a "prompt, impartial and vigorous" legislative investigation into the mine disaster.

Fixing Responsibility Urged.

In a message read to both houses, the Governor asked for an inquiry "that will clearly fix the cause of the tragedy and the responsibility therefor; which will establish whether there was laxity or negligence on the part of any individual, corporation or governmental official or agency; and which will consider such legislation as may be required to insure the safety of those engaged in mining in Illinois."

Governor Green called attention to present division of mine inspection authority between the Federal and State governments and asked for a special study with a view to clarifying their respective responsibilities. He also asked the legislative groups to determine whether existing public and private agencies had the facilities to care for the bereaved families and suggested further aid if the need existed. He asked for completion of the inquiry in time for action at the current session ending on June 30.

Meanwhile, the resignation of Robert Weir, assistant director of the Illinois State Department of Mines and Minerals, had been urged earlier today by Representative Paul Powell, Democratic minority floor leader in the Illinois House of Representatives.

Measure to Aid Dependents.

Representative Carl H. Preiha (Dem.), Pana, promised to introduce a measure to give $5000 to each of the dependents of the mine explosion victims and said he understood Senator Fribley would introduce a concurrent resolution in the Senate. If adopted, the State would pay out $555,000 to the dependents.

In urging that Weir follow the example of his superior, Robert M. Medill in resigning, Powell said he felt Weir was too close to the mine operators to safeguard the interests of the miners. (Weir was associated for 20 years with the Bell & Zoller interests, which own the Centralia mine.)

"I do not believe the citizens of Illinois will be completely satisfied with Medill's resignation," Powell said. "It will take more than that. His resignation may clear up mine troubles from now on and I hope safety regulations will be carried out in the mines, but it cannot wipe out the fact that 111 miners lost their lives because those regulations were not enforced in the recent past.

Comment on Medill's Quitting.

"Medill's resignation," he continued, "is an admission within itself that negligence caused these 111 deaths. The director has finally done what he should have done a year ago—or, at least, he should have paid attention to Mine Inspector Driscoll Scanlan and let him close the mine until safety regulations were carried out."

Expressing the hope the investigation now under way at Centralia would be conducted in a thorough and impartial manner, Powell said, "Medill is not the only one to blame for the conditions leading to the disaster and the investigation should not be designed to make him the goat."

John McCann, president of the Progressive Mine Workers of America, in a statement today, said that Medill's successor should be "an experienced miner who knows what the score is and who has been down there with the miners." It is the consensus of observers here that the rank and file of miners would oppose any permanent appointee without such experience. McCann said Progressive Mine Workers had been asked to work this week and contribute their earnings to the relief of the victims' dependents.

ILLINOIS LEGISLATURE VOTES INQUIRY INTO MINE BLAST

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., April 3 (AP)—A legislative investigation of the Centralia mine disaster was voted today by the Illinois General Assembly.

The House approved, 134 to 0, a resolution setting up a 10-member committee to conduct the probe. The resolution was passed yesterday by the Senate.

Representative R. J. Branson (Rep.), Centralia, urged immediate appointment of the committee so members could go to Centralia tomorrow and begin their against. The Senate ratified the amendment, 35 to 10 yesterday.

KILLED WORKING ON SAFETY MEASURES AT COAL MINE

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 4

WATTIS, Utah, April 4 (AP)—Nels D. Brotherson, a coal miner, was injured fatally yesterday while working to complete safety measures at the Lion Coal Co. mine.

He died of a crushed head and internal injuries when he apparently lost his balance and fell from a tipple into a steel railroad gondola car 300 feet below, investigating officers reported.

Brotherson was employed as part of a crew to improve safety conditions at the mine while it is shut down for the miners' memorial period.

DUST SPREAD CENTRALIA DISASTER, PROBERS FIND

MINE OPERATOR DENIES AND THEN ADMITS HE WAS TOLD OF DANGER

Governor's Fact-Finders Say Neither Cause nor Point of Origin of Explosion Have Been Ascertained.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 3

By SELWYN PEPPER
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 3 — Members of the Governor's fact-finding commission investigating the Centralia Coal Co. mine disaster today decided the explosion which killed 111 men last week was propagated by excessive amounts of coal dust in the mine.

This decision came after William P. Young, operating head of the coal company, had at first denied that excessive coal dust in the mine had been brought to his attention, but when pressed admitted he had seen reports by both state and Federal mine inspectors, detailing the danger of explosion due to the excessively dusty condition of the mine.

The commission wound up its hearings at Centralia today and announced it would meet again next Tuesday at Springfield, Ill., to attempt to formulate a report. The report will be made public, members said.

Young, asked at last night's session whether he had received any complaints about dust in the last year, replied: "Not in particular, no sir. Not that I recall."

But when asked if he had received any complaints of dust in the mine in the last two years, Young recalled that early in 1945 State Mine Inspector Driscoll Scanlan had ordered the mine shut down three days a week, so that the dust could be cleared out.

"In April," he related, "we shut down for three or four days to clean some roads. I believe that was when Mr. Scanlan suggested we do that."

"Since then," Chairman John E. Cassidy of the commission asked, "have you had knowledge of any more complaints?"

Saw Federal Reports.

"I see federal reports every time there's an inspection," Young answered.

"Do you recall any federal complaints of dust in the mine?"

"No sir," Young replied, "I was not aware of any unusual conditions because of dust."

After some hesitation he acknowledged that he had seen "one or two" of the state inspector's reports.

Reports by Federal Bureau of Mines inspectors showed that 60 articles of the federal mine safety code were being violated at the Centralia mine last November—and 51 articles were still being violated March 20, five days before the fatal explosion. The reports told of clouds of coal dust and of ineffective measures to control dust.

Repeated Warnings.

Reports by the state inspector repeatedly had warned that dust in the mine constituted an "explosion hazard." Young, however, said he could "throw no light on the terrible disaster."

He added that "it seems the consensus that this was a dust explosion. I think that's correct."

The decision of the Governor's fact-finding commission, that the explosion was spread by dust, came as members of the commission reported on their inspection of the mine. John E. Jones, safety engineer for the Old Ben Coal Corp., member of the commission, told the group he was convinced the excessive amount of dust in the mine propagated the explosion. Other members gave their tacit consent, several repeating the assertion.

Cause Still Undetermined.

Oliver Bishop, United Mine Workers representative on the commission, added that he was unable to determine either the cause of the explosion, which spread through the coal dust in the air, or the point of ignition. Other members agreed to this, also.

Jones, however, declared that "although the mine has been rock dusted in certain sections, rock dusting was not adequate to prevent the propagation of the explosion through the dust. This is one of the driest mines I've ever seen."

Asked if anyone had consulted him about putting rock dust in the mine, to help prevent a coal dust explosion, Young replied, "no, that is normally taken care of by men in charge at the mine."

William H. Brown, underground foreman at the mine, yesterday testified that the mine management had given him authority to take safety measures only "within reasonable limits." These limits, he said, did not enable him to correct conditions complained of by state and federal inspectors.

Another of Young's employes, Charles Ford, one of the two mine examiners employed by the firm, testified that the accumulation of dust in the mine was excessive. "I'd say it was more dust than we should have had," he said. "Our state inspector reported on that and sent his reports to Medill."

Ford was referring to reports by Scanlan to Robert M. Medill, who resigned Tuesday, under fire, as director of the State Department of Mines and Minerals.

"I think if Medill had gone on through with the reports the state inspector gave him this would never have happened," said Ford, meaning the explosion which took the lives of 111 men could have been prevented. "The inspector had ruled several times the dust in the mine made a hazardous condition."

Young, however, said he knew very little about the lack of safety precautions in the mine.

James Sneddon, inspector-at-large for the State Mines and Minerals Department, asked Young: "Did your superintendent ever consult you on the matter of having one continuous circuit of air?"

"No," Young replied, "but I knew they were planning a change."

"Did they tell you that having only one circuit of air was a direct violation of the law?" Sneddon pursued.

"Not that I recall," Young replied calmly.

Sneddon then asked: "What preparation had you made to get the men out in case of fire?" Young answered, "As soon as you smell smoke, you're not going to stay there. Smoke won't kill you."

Dissatisfied with the reply, hard-bitten Sneddon, a veteran of the mines, pointed out that with one continuous air current, smoke would circulate as fast as air. He asked, "How long do you think it would have taken to get all 142 men out?" Young thought 15 or 20 minutes would have sufficed. Actually only 31 men escaped from the blast and gas.

Wearing a neat blue suit with white pin stripe, Young began his 35 minutes in the witness chair by saying he lived in Glencoe, a suburb of Chicago, and has been operating vice president of the coal company for about 10 years.

Question of Titles.

He expressed the opinion that H. F. McDonald is president but participated in operations of the company "to a very limited extent." McDonald is the federal manager "whatever that means," Young said, smiling. "In other words," remarked Chairman Cassidy, "he has the title but you have the job." "Yes, sir," Young agreed.

"Has your work brought you to Centralia frequently?" the chairman asked.

"It depended on how things were going," Young replied.

"How often did you come here?"

"About once a month," Young explained. "I would stay only a few hours each time but occasionally I'd stay all day." He added he had kept posted on conditions at the mine "fairly well."

About 50 miners, state officials and union executives listened closely to his testimony in the gloomy crystal room of the Pittenger Hotel. Young and the seven committee members sat under fluorescent lights at a conference table. There were no women or children present and the atmosphere was one of intense seriousness, particularly when subsequent witnesses told of their experiences in the mine, after the terrific blast.

Young was in Chicago at the time of the explosion. He said he was last inside the mine in August. "Was it in reasonably safe condition?" Cassidy asked.

In reply, Young said: "I recommended that three sections be sealed off. Other than that, everything else was normal. There was no more of a dust problem than always."

Then he volunteered this statement to the committee: "I don't know what happened down there. I hope we find out. I've always felt this mine was free of gas and I never thought there was a hazard from permissible explosives. Something happened there but just what I don't know."

Saw State Reports.

Asked whether he was advised of reports on the mine by state mine inspectors, Young thought a moment and then said, "Yes, one or two of them. I was consulted by our superintendent on the complaints. One was with regard to an additional examiner that they wanted put on. I don't remember what the other was."

Then the chairman inquired if he knew that some employes had complained to the State Department of Mines asking that papers be taken from the Centralia mine's underground foreman, Brown, and from Norman C. Prudent, former superintendent. Gazing at the ceiling through his rimless glasses, Young thought, then said, "I was consulted at that time."

"Did you investigate the complaint?" Cassidy asked.

"I knew in a general way what the condition was," Young answered. "We couldn't get enough help on Sundays to clear the roads. All through the war we couldn't get enough men for Sunday work. There's spillage of coal from cars on the haulage ways that has to be cleared up.

"We consulted among ourselves about a sprinkler system and ordered a carload of pipe for the system about last Aug. 15. We wanted to order more about the first of the year but couldn't place the order.

Pipe Hard to Get.

"The mine is dry—drier than the average. We decided to put in the sprinkler system but pipe is still very hard to get. One carload would have gone a long way.

"As for rock-dusting, it's a question of having labor and supplies available. Sometimes we put a whole carload on. It depends on how much an area needs dusting."

Young, who has worked in the mining industry for 27 years, said his first knowledge that the Centralia miners had begged Gov. Dwight H. Green to "please save our lives" by enforcing mine safety regulations came from newspaper accounts after the explosion.

He said he had had several discussions with Scanlan about seepage of salt water into the mine from oil wells and that steps had been taken over a period of two years to counter the seepage.

"Do you agree on the value of rock-dusting?" he was asked.

"In my opinion, it is very desirable," he said, "but I never felt very strong for sprinkling because the water dries off. In winter, the moisture is absorbed quickly."

Supervisors at the mine had authority to spend money for safety precautions, he insisted. "Did they consult you on any imminent danger?" was the next question. "No, sir," he replied.

The rockdusting by machines had been done at the mine long before it was required by law, Young asserted.

Other witnesses at today's session included Brown, recalled; C. V. Zinkevicz, cage operator at the mine, and H. E. Sundermeyer, night foreman. All testified that there was not an excessive amount of smoke following the explosion.

Sundermeyer also described the practice of distributing blasting powder in the mine. Each day, he said, 16 boxes, each containing 50 pounds of powder, were taken into the mine and distributed among the various entries for storage in worked-out rooms. Under the system used, he said, each entry received no more than 75 to 100 pounds of powder every four days.

Miners Testify.

Grim miners including some who survived the mine explosion, other company men and mine inspectors also testified last night.

Victor Meyer of Centralia, who works in the Glenridge Mine and is president of Local 1397 of the United Mine Workers, said succinctly:

"I wanted to speak about mine inspectors. We would like to have state mine inspectors taken out of politics. That's all."

Ralph Stonecipher, a hollow-cheeked miner who worked in the No. 5 mine of the Centralia Coal Co. for 23 years, asserted:

"That mine could be sprinkled twice a night instead of once in six months. And the fan could be moved to the top."

Then he added: "Safety had gone down in that mine. During the war, no safety meetings were held. We asked that the roadway be sprinkled. We knew they were short of help.

"I complained of the dust and I complained because they were shooting on shift. The president of our local, who is dead now, also complained."

Asked if he had complained to the management, Stonecipher replied: "Our committee did."

H. C. Niermann, a mine superintendent, told the story of the mine disaster as he saw it:

"I was on top when the fuse went out. I went into the mine immediately after the fan stopped. I don't understand one thing—some inspectors found places which were not shot. I think some shots went off beforehand, either accidentally or in some other way. The inspectors found some shots were fired and some were not. In my opinion, an excess amount of powder went off before time and a shot or an accumulation of powder was ignited in some way."

Niermann, as other employes of Young, testified he was authorized to spend money for mine safety only "in reason." The mine was rock-dusted the last time in July, 1946, he said.

Medill testified yesterday after waiting most of the day to be called.

A report by Scanlan on the Centralia mine, written Dec. 13 and 14, 1945, was brought to his attention, Medill said, because the "recommendations were a little out of the usual." He related he appointed a commission to investigate and they reported "conditions were pretty much as Scanlan said they were, but many improvements had been made.

Medill said he recalled no other reports by Scanlan that were "as outstanding." Scanlan did not ask for permission to close the mine, Medill asserted. No one besides Scanlan ever complained about that mine, Medill added.

Medill told of having ordered one mine closed, after making a "double check" on the inspector's report that it was unsafe. He said he was not sure whether the closed mine was near Belleville or Breeze, in Illinois.

Asked if he had seen the letter written by miners to Gov. Green, begging him to have safety measures enforced in the Centralia mine, Medill replied:

"It was sent over to me. The Governor's secretary asked my comment. I told him the substance of the report on the mine which had been made by my investigating commission."

Witnesses were not placed under oath before testifying before the fact-finding commission.

Scanlan, adding to his previous testimony, said that "Medill got hostile" after Scanlan had recommended a second time that sprinklers be installed in the Centralia mine. "The miners wanted something done for their safety," Scanlan said. "They were on my neck."

State Inspector Frank Stank declared that mines other than the Centralia coal firm's mine found it not too expensive to take proper precautions against dust explosions. The Superior Coal Co. mines, he said, are "dusted with rock dust so thick you'd think you were in a salt mine."

Value of Rock-Dusting.

M. J. Ankeny, a Federal mine inspector, declared that "adequate rock-dusting probably would be a complete protection against a widespread explosion propagating throughout a mine," as happened at the Centralia mine. He added that rock dust should be applied close to the working faces. Witnesses testified that rock dust was not applied much closer than 600 feet from the working faces in the Centralia mine.

Fred Lichtenfeld, a company mine examiner testified that the Centralia mine always contained "a lot of dust."

Lichtenfeld said the company examiners did not report the dust. "That's not our job, as far as I know. I guess we could have if wanted to, but the inspector of the state usually takes care of that."

Federal Mine Inspector Ankeny expressed the opinion that, if dust in a mine is dry, the amount is not an important factor in making conditions favorable for an explosion. "An explosion is almost as likely with a small amount of dust as with a large amount," he stated.

"The Federal Bureau of Mines knows only about one-eighth of an ounce of dust in suspension in a cubic foot of air can propagate an explosion.

"If dust is produced, regardless of quantity, measures have to be taken." Under questioning he added: "It is considered good mining practice to keep accumulations of dust along the haulage roads carried out. Most careful mines won't allow accumulations. This is an added safety feature; if that's done less rock dust is required."

Federal Mine Inspector Joseph Malesky told the committee the explosion might have occurred had there been no accumulation of dust in the mine, but added: "Dust made it a lot more widespread—propagated it. Otherwise, it might have been a very limited explosion."

Scanlan Heard Again.

Scanlan, returning to the witness stand yesterday, declared: "A large quantity of dust on haulage roads means more dust in suspension."

Walter J. Johnson, general superintendent of the mine since last Oct. 1, testified he met with Scanlan and Federal Inspector Frank Perz for the first time on March 17 or 18 and told them what had been done at the mine to correct conditions under complaint. "Perz had my word we'd give the matter of sprinkling immediate attention," Johnson said.

There was considerable testimony about classification of Mine No. 5 with regard to gas in the workings, blasting method, and the use of open carbide lamps by the miners. The Federal Bureau of Mines views the Centralia mine as a gaseous mine, but the Illinois Department of Mines, using a less exacting standard, classifies it as a non-gaseous.

Under Federal Mine safety code, a mine is gaseous if more than ¼ of 1 per cent of methane, an explosive gas, can be detected by chemical analysis or otherwise. Under Illinois regulations, a mine is gaseous only if methane is detected by use of a safety lamp. This lamp has a white flame, and the gas, when present in sufficient quantity, produces a blue cap on the white flame. This lamp flame test, however, will not detect less than about 1 per cent of the gas.

Type of Blasting.

Inspector Malesky said the type of blasting employed in the Centralia mine was not approved by the Federal Bureau of Mines. Caps and fuses on explosives must be fired electrically in a gaseous mine, and the federal safety code recommends that even nongaseous mines avoid firing with fuse. Malesky pointed out the firing method used in Mine No. 5 had a machine-gun-action effect, and once a fuse was lighted no control could be exercised over it.

Illinois law makes use of closed lamps—fastened to miners' caps—compulsory only in gaseous mines. Inspector Ankeny was asked: "Assuming a blown-out shot, would an open carbide light (the type used in mine No. 5) ignite dust?"

"Yes, sir," was the emphatic answer.

"You consider such a light a hazard in a mine of this type?"

Asked why the management had not followed the federal recommendation calling for use of closed lights, Brown said most of the miners objected to the safety lamps on the ground they "leaked and ran down your back." This was a reference to short-circuiting.

Brown said Young had obtained 100 closed lamps for use in two of the company's mines at Peoria, Ill., but the union had objected and few miners had accepted them.

State Inspector Stank said from 40 to 90 per cent of the workers in six large non-gaseous mines in his district use closed lamps, but some men still prefer to work with the open lights. He agreed the closed lights provide a safety. He said miners objected that the lamps are "a little too heavy on the head."

Colbert's Testimony.

Federal inspector George Colbert said the 15 Centralia miners who lived for one and a half to two hours in one of the mine's southern passages after the explosion "might have been alive today" had they penetrated further into the workings and barricaded themselves instead of taking refuge in an abandoned room.

"Why didn't these men go farther south?" he was asked.

"The use of carbide lights may have left them in the dark, not knowing where they were going," the inspector replied. "Also, they might have not known the value of a barricade."

Federal Inspector Joseph Stanton was aked if miners generally are acquainted with the ventilation system and direction of air currents in their workings.

"No," was the answer. The inspector said education along this line would be advisable.

The federal inspectors testified they had made trips into the mine since the explosion, some in the course of recovery operations and others to make certain it was safe for the committee to enter yesterday. None had any definite conclusions ot offer other than the belief that the blast was a dust explosion.

John E. Pick Jr. of Centralia, young war veteran who wore an Army leather flight jacket, testified: "I was fairly certain it wasn't entirely a powder explosion. I think dust entered into it. I worked with powder overseas but I'm not an expert on the subject.

"I lost the greatest friend I had in that explosion—my dad. If mining laws can be fully enforced, then somebody else won't have to do this again. I wouldn't know what law is needed but I certainly realize there are laws to take care of these things. If Scanlan's ideas about sprinkling and rock dusting had been followed, it would have helped tremendously."

Young Pick was in the mine at the time of the blast but escaped. He was a trip rider. He tried to find his father ("I was selfish and wanted to see my dad") but failed. He and others brought out four survivors.

Complained About Dust.

William Ed Auberry, financial secretary of the local union, a miner for 44 years, testified two weeks ago he complained to the mine manager about the dust. One of two surviving officers of the local, Auberry related he went down in the mine with a rescue group, found groups of dead and saw what looked like the effects

But Henry Goforth, an employe in the mine for 29 years, testified: "I had no fear the mine was in dangerous condition and have no fear of it now."

William E. Rowekamp, recording secretary of the local union, a mine employe for 30 years, related he wrote the letter to Gov. Green complaining of conditions in the mine.

"We begged the Governor to help us or we'd all be blown out of there because of dust," he said. "Scanlan was the best inspector we ever had. Any man down there would go to hell for Scanlan. But it seemed like his hands were tied—why I don't know."

All members of the local's safety committee are dead, Rowekamp said, except one man who was sick.

First Picture Inside Centralia Mine

Six-ton steel coal cars upset by the blast in Centralia Coal Co. Mine No. 5 being examined today by ROY CAPPS, United States Bureau of Mines safety instructor. The picture, first of the mine's interior since the disaster, was made by a Chicago Times photographer representing all newspapers.

Medill Has Served as Mine Director Under 3 Governors

Dean of Green's Cabinet Who Resigned Began as a Miner—Speaks of Self as 'G.O.P. Pet.'

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 2

By HARRY WILENSKY
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill. April 2 — Robert M. Medill, who resigned as director of the Illinois State Department of Mines and Minerals yesterday, was the dean of Gov. Dwight H. Green's cabinet. He is 66 years old, and has been associated with mining for nearly half a century.

He went to work in a mine at Wenona, Ill., at the age of 17, digging coal with a pick. "I have held every position in and around mines except that of owner," he told the Post-Dispatch today. He owns no stock in any mine, he stated, this being prohibited by law.

In 1909, at the age of 27, he was made superintendent of three Dering Coal Co. mines in the Danville (Ill.) district. The following year he was transferred to West Frankfort, Ill., to direct operations in two Dering mines. From there he went to Harrisburg, Ill., where in 1919 he was general superintendent in charge of 10 mines for the O'Gara Coal Co.

Appointed by Lowden.

In 1920 he was superintendent at Dowell, Ill., for the Union Collieries Co. He resigned in June, 1920, and in the same month was appointed director of the State Department of Mines and Minerals by Gov. Frank O. Lowden. The appointment, Medill said, was made at the request of the Illinois Coal Operators' Association and the United Mine Workers of America.

He served as mines director also under Gov. Len Small until 1928. After leaving office, he promoted a coal company at Verona, Ill.

In 1925, he sold his stock in this company and went to Western Canada as vice president of the Leland Coal Co. at Taber, Alberta.

Returning to the United States in 1927, he went west to become general superintendent of the Moffat Coal Co. at Oak Creek, Colo. He resigned nine years later.

Gov. Edwin C. Johnson of Colorado, now United States Senator, commissioned Medill to make a complete survey of all Colorado mines following an explosion at the Monarch Mine, north of Denver. The survey was completed, and his recommendations for safety measures were drafted within six months.

Medill returned to Illinois about 1938. His home is at Roanoke, in Woodford county. He supported Green in the 1940 gubernatorial campaign, and returned to the directorship of the mines department on Jan. 7, 1941.

In January, 1942, a truck collided with Medill's automobile, and Medill's legs were smashed. Friends feared he might never be able to walk again, but after a year he was able to return to his desk. He cannot walk long distances.

Emphasizing his long and close association with the miner's organization, Medill pointed out that he served as president of the UMW local at Springfield when he worked for the Peabody Coal Co. in the early 1900s. Before that, he said, he was a member of the pit committee which handled grievances with the management.

As Mines Director.

In his terms of service as mines director, Medill said, he "worked for" the State Mining Board. The four members of the board are appointed by the Governor and draw $1000 a year each. The director is their executive officer, he said.

His own practice, he said, was to call on more than one inspector, usually a commission of three, to study any problems on which he might differ with a district inspector. Sometimes, in such a case, he said, he would select a union representative to take part in such a study. This manner of procedure, he said, was his own idea, and not a department rule.

Medill said it was customary for the Governor to consult him on appointments of inspectors, and that the two miners' unions, United Mine Workers and Progressive Mine Workers, also were consulted.

Referring to his appointment by three Republican governors, Medill spoke of himself as the "G.O.P. pet."

Reporter Tells Of Trip Into Centralia Mine

Scenes of Violent Force and Death in Tunnels.

Gov. Green's committee investigating the mine disaster at Centralia permitted only one reporter to accompany it on its inspection of the Centralia Coal Co.'s Mine No. 5 yesterday. The reporter, drawn by lot to represent the combined press, was Fletcher Wilson of the Chicago Sun. His story follows:

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 3

By FLETCHER WILSON

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 3—You drop 540 feet with Gov. Green's fact-finding committee to see what all the testimony into the mine disaster is about.

You travel nearly three miles back into the workings to the place where the explosion eight days ago apparently originated. You are in the No. 5 mine of the Centralia Coal Co., where 111 men were killed.

You have seen six-ton steel coal cars turned over by the blast, the collapsed dinner buckets of the dead passengers still beside them. You have seen the place where miners spend their working days.

You come out convinced that the miners have a case when they complain that theirs is not a safe way to make a living. The evidence of the loss of 111 lives shows up in the ray from the miner's lamp furnished you.

Comparatively Safe Mine.

You are told that this was a comparatively safe mine because the management had taken a few safety precautions where many coal mines take none.

The descent down the shaft and the trip behind a sorrel mule named "Red" back into the workings was made with the committee.

Six members of the committee went down. The coal mining authorities among them wanted to see if they could find the cause of the explosion. They came up to announce that the origin is now "more mysterious than ever."

Yet a definite theory was developed. The committee, after splitting into two parties, came together to return to the coal faces where men were preparing blasts at the time of the explosion.

Row after row of drillings were found loaded with explosives, tamped in and the fuses dangling out already split for lighting. These were intact. When the explosion hit, the normal time for firing shots was still 10 minutes away.

But two shots had been exploded. They had created what is known as "windy shots," blasts which had blown backwards from the holes, torpedo fashion. They were in separate rooms of the mine. Each was a top row shot although the bottom row normally is fired first.

How both of these could have been discharged accidentally at the same time is the mystery. How either could have set off the dust explosion is a matter for conjecture.

One of these "windy shots" may have been lit prematurely by mistake or accident. The charge firing out into the coal room may have ignited dust and caused a flame whic htouched off the other shot.

But the charges found intact were all what is known as permissible explosive, a type which throws a flame too brief to ignite anything else.

And why were so many shots left unexploded?

In the room where a jagged cut on the coal face indicated one of the blown-out shots, four men had been found tossed into a heap, with their legs wrapped around their necks. But evidence of explosive violence here and in the other room was not as great as 50 feet away where roof supports were blown down, the trolley cable wrenched to the ground, the cable supports bent parallel in the line of the blast, and shale dropped in heaps from the ceiling.

The explosion had built up in force as it progressed before dispersing through the tunnels and diminishing. There had been fire, but apparently that had lasted only an instant. In places where men had been found with their fingers and ears burned off, pieces of paper lay, scorched only at the corners.

Soot on the Walls.

All through the portions of the mine visited, soot was coated on the walls as if blown from a paint spray. But little of this coating had the harsh feel of coke. It gave the velvet sensation of powder when rubbed between the fingers. This was fresh dust on the walls. It covered the whitewash effect of dusting done with pulverized limestone, a method of minimizing coal dust in the air.

John E. Jones, adviser to the Federal Coal Mines Administration, a committee member, explained that fire had burned out all the oxygen in the air before much of the flying coal dust could be ignited.

The amount of dust which can be heaped on a quarter, he said, will exhaust the oxygen in a cubic foot of air. There was enough dust in the mine, in the air and on the walls, to cover all the quarters ever minted.

The brief flash of fire burned out all the oxygen in the air, leaving carbon monoxide. This took the lives of the men not struck by the initial violence of the blast. They breathed the carbon monoxide. They did not take a second breath.

Out of one group of 20 men in the workings closest to the shaft, you are told, 16 ran out into a passageway. They died at once. Four remained behind until the air cleared. They lived and escaped.

In the violence area, a heavy locomotive was tossed sideways in a cross cut so that the committee members had to crawl over. Steel cars were lifted, one upside down with another piled partly on top. A coal-cutting machine was streamlined by the flow of air.

And every few feet were the dinner buckets, twisted helmets and carbide lamps of the men whose bodies had been taken away.

A committee member, who must be unidentified, swore. He said:

"We will spend much time trying to find the cause of this explosion. But the cause is unimportant. You cannot prevent men from becoming careless or an accident now and then.

"But everyone in the industry knows how these explosions can be kept from spreading into disasters. There must be water sprinklers at the face, where the coal is cut. There must be frequent rock dusting in the entries and cross cuts to cut down the combustibility of the dust.

"It just isn't done. It's expensive."

SAFETY UNIT CITED MINE DANGERS TO COLLISSON

Complained of Dust in Letter Sent to U.S. Administrator Month Before Blast.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 3

By HARRY WILENSKY
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 3—The union safety committee at the Centralia Coal Co. complained to the federal mine administrator a month before the disaster in the mine here that its biggest grievance was the presence of dust while mechanical coal loaders were in operation.

This was shown in a letter submitted in evidence today before a subcommittee of the Senate Public Lands Committee investigating last week's explosion.

"The biggest grievance," said the union letter, "is dust while Joy loaders are working." Joy loaders are a brand of equipment.

The letter, dated last Feb. 24 and addressed to Navy Capt. N. H Collisson, federal coal mine administrator, was signed by the members of the safety committee of the miners' union. Only one of them survived the disaster. It called attention also to slabs of rock loose in the roofs of certain entries, or side galleries, which, the letter declared, required attention. In addition, it stated that some timbers and mine props were piled too close to the car tracks in two entries.

22 Witnesses Summoned.

The Senate subcommittee's investigation started today, with 22 witnesses summoned to testify. Legislation to reduce coal mining hazards may result from it.

Frank Sever, special counsel of the subcommittee, introduced into evidence a large volume of documentary material, including the union letter.

This included also state inspection reports about the mine dated between Dec. 11, 1945, and this March 19; a report of a federal mine inspector about it dated March 17-20; a Bureau of Mines publicity "release" on the condition of the mine, dated last June 5; a series of letters between the Centralia company and the federal administrator extending back to late last November; pages from the company mine examiner's books for five days immediately preceding the explosion; early 1946 records of the State Mining Board concerning this mine; the federal mine safety code and the general Illinois mining laws.

Senators Conducting Hearing.

Conducting the hearing are Senator Guy Cordon (Rep.) of Oregon, the subcommittee chairman, and Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney (Dem.) of Wyoming. The third member, Senator Henry C. Dworshak (Rep.) of Idaho, is expected tomorrow.

The first witness, on the stand for several hours, was H. C. Niermann, mine superintendent, a subordinate of the general superintendent. He was among those rescued after the explosion. Tracing the history of the mine, which was opened about 1907, he said he started working there as a boy in 1917. There had been two explosions before his employment, in which several men were killed, he related.

"In my time," he continued, "there was an explosion about 1920 or 1921, in which the three members of a blasting crew were killed. That was considered a dust explosion, set off by black blasting powder. It occurred between 5 and 6 p. m. when the only people in the mine were two shot firers and one shot runner.

"It was the policy then to shoot blasts only when all the rest of the men were out of the mine. This policy was changed in 1927 when the mine switched to use of permissible (approved safety) powder and from hand loading to mechanical loading."

Testimony on Explosives.

Niermann repeated testimony he had given before the state fact-finding commission as to his opinion that an excessive amount of explosive was used at the time of the disaster. It became apparent that the handling of witnesses by the senatorial group was much more strict than by the state commission. Questioning was less sympathetic and polite and when the witness got away from the point at issue he would be firmly led back to it.

There had been a recent warning by state and federal inspectors that more than the limit of a 24-hour supply of explosives allowed by safety practices was being stored in the mine, Niermann said. He told of orders issued to correct this, including a notice in February calling for strict compliance.

Air Control Devices Blown Out.

Niermann said the fact that 141 men, instead of the legal limit of 100, were served with one air supply had nothing to do with chances of survival after the explosion, as air-control devices were blown out anyway. He conceded that the letter of the law had not been followed as to rock dusting as a safety measure. Rock dusting was to have been done three days before the explosion but some adjustment of equipment prevented it, he declared.

Niermann disclosed that miners trapped in the thirteenth and fourteenth sections of the mine telephoned to the main shaft for aid immediately after the explosion. The concentration of monoxide gas and the absence of oxygen masks prevented rescue efforts "at that time," he said.

The assistant superintendent, discussing possible causes of the explosion, said it might have been set off by an open flame, from the lamps used by miners on their caps, coming in contact with a fuse. Another possibility, he said, was that a rock dropped from the mine ceiling into an open box containing dynamite caps.

Niermann said he had talked to an assistant foreman, since the disaster and was told that men prepared blasting shots in advance, and left them in exposed places for the next shift. He said supervisory personnel in the mine had held safety meetings both in February and in March, but had held none from last November until February. At safety meetings, he said, supervisors were cautioned against allowing shots to be prepared in advance.

Frank Perz, Federal Bureau of Mines inspector, testified that federal inspectors had never had and still did not have power to enforce their safety recommendations. However, he said, "since the mines were taken over by the Government, July 29, 1946, we have been instructed to report to the Bureau of Mines if we find miners in imminent danger at any mines we inspect."

Perz declared the Centralia mine had not complied with his recommendations concerning additional rock-dusting, to prevent coal-dust explosions from spreading. Instead of dusting within 80 feet of working faces in the mine, he said rock dust was 800 to 1000 feet away in places.

"The mine had not been rock-dusted, at my last inspection in March, since the inspection before that, in 1946," Perz said. To keep a mine adequately rock dusted, he said, "is a daily job."

At his last inspection, the Bureau of Mines inspector said, a carload of rock dust was observed on the mine railroad siding—but had not been used in the mine.

Testimony on Thickness of Dust.

Perz said the lack of ventilation in the mine was a "health condition," but that he did not consider it connected with the explosion. Dust in the mine, he said, was extremely thick.

"The loading machine operator could hardly see the end of his car, for the dust," Perz said. A short-circuited wire, caused by a roof cave-in, could have ignited the dust, he said, or it could have been ignited by an open flame.

"I considered the dust there a serious hazard," he said, adding that he had discussed it with Walter Johnson, general superintendent, with Niermann and with William H. Brown, underground foreman.

Niermann acknowledges that "we were informed" of the dust hazard. Perz added, however, that the same condition had existed in the mine for "15 or 20 years," and that he had not considered it an "imminent danger of explosion."

Perz said he would consider the presence of dust, in any quantities he had observed, an "imminent danger of explosion" only if sufficient quantity of inflammable methane gas were present too.

Use of open flame lamps on miners' caps, he said, was not a likely cause of the explosion. He said miners were prejudiced against electric lamps because of their weight and because, when this safety measure was taken, miners usually were not allowed to smoke in the mines.

Smoking, he said, was a fire hazard more than an explosion hazard. "About two out of every three miners in my district smoke while they work," Perz said.

A faulty blasting charge, he said, "is the most likely cause of the dust explosion."

Perz said the Centralia firm could have used calcium chloride to keep down coal dust "without adding any special equipment." He couldn't remember whether he had recommended this step to mine officials, but said other mines had done it with success.

Witnesses in the Senate committee hearing are being sworn, in contrast to the practice before the state commission. The Senate group hopes it may complete its hearing here Saturday. Chairman Cordon said that when it returned to Washington, Secretary of the Interior J. A. Krug would be called to testify and that John L. Lewis, head of the United Mine Workers of America, could appear if he desired.

United States Bureau of Mines inspectors also began an investigation today.

The inspectors will examine the mine closely in order to determine the cause of the blast as exactly as possible. They expect to complete their investigation under ground Saturday.

Fact-Finding Commission Entering Mine

—By a Post-Dispatch Staff Photographer.

Members of the Governor's fact-finding commission about to make an inspection trip today inside the Centralia Coal Co. Mine No. 5. From left: JOHN E. JONES, representative of the federal Coal Mines Administrator; WILLIAM GALLAGHER, district engineer, Bureau of Mines; a Chicago reporter; WILBERT J. HOHLT, State's Attorney of Washington county; DAVID H. DEVONALD (partly obscured), representing mine owners; OLIVER BISHOP (partly obscured), United Mine Workers representative; FRED HELLMEYER, Centralia Coal Co. electrician; and JAMES H. SNEDDON, state mine inspector.

BACKING IN HOUSE FOR MINE SAFETY LAW WITH TEETH ON LEWIS'S PLEA

Support Also for U.S. to Use $710,000 Contempt Fines to Help Families of Men Killed in Two Big Disasters.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 4

WASHINGTON, April 4 (AP)—John L. Lewis's demands for greater safety for men who mine coal in what he called (Secretary of the Interior) "Krug's slaughterhouses" developed ready promises of help from Congress today. Various House members urged safety laws with teeth.

Lewis received some support, too, for a proposal that the Government give back the $710,000 contempt of court fine on him and his United Mine Workers' Union to help widows and orphans of men who died in the two big mine explosions of recent years—Centralia, Ill., last week and Straight Creek, Ky., in 1945.

Members of a House labor subcommittee who heard the UMW president testify for six hours yesterday showed no inclination, however, to go along with his suggestion that Congress ask President Truman to fire Krug. Truman himself left no doubt that he is standing squarely behind his Cabinet officer.

Schwabe's Reaction.

Representative Max Schwabe, (Rep.), Missouri, chairman of the subcommittee, said the group "would look with sympathy" on a "strong safety bill."

Representative Landis (Rep.), Indiana, said he would press a bill he already has introduced for a federal mine inspection system with teeth.

He said also a bill would be introduced to carry out Lewis's proposal for a $710,000 trust fund for widows and orphans of men who died at Centralia and Straight Creek.

Landis said he would offer the bill if Representative Vursell (Rep.), Illinois, does not. Centralia is in Vursell's district.

Vursell announced today he would ask Congress to set up the trust fund. Vursell said he would introduce next week a bill to authorize the fund. It would be administered by a congressional committee.

The $710,000 is the amount of the fines left standing after the Supreme Court upheld a United States District Court contempt conviction of Lewis and the union for ignoring an order to rescind last November's strike call.

The original fine against the UMW was $3,500,000, but the court pared that down while leaving Lewis's personal penalty of $10,000 unchanged.

Questioned About Contract.

At yesterday's hearing Representative Nixon (Rep.), California, asked Lewis whether the union and the private operators could work out a contract when the Government withdraws. Lewis said: "We always have."

Nixon said quickly: "But it might necessitate another strike?" Lewis: "That's right. But let me tell you something. It's the law of supply and demand to withhold labor when it becomes necessary."

While Lewis appeared to have made a deep impression on several of his congressional hearers, John D. Battle, executive secretary of the National Coal Association, lashed out at the union leader and "timid politicians" with this statement:

"He (Lewis) has treated the country to a sickening exhibition of mock heroics about the dangers to which the miners are exposed—dangers which in reality are less today than at any time in history.

"He has launched a campaign of hysteria and emotional sensationalism which now appears to have spread to those officials of the Government in whose hands the bituminous coal mines now rest. . . .

"Increased safety in coal mines is a gradual process. There is no magic formula for eliminating the inherent hazards.

"But one thing is certain—if coal mines and their operation are to be at the mercy of a labor dictator on the one hand and timid politicians on the other hand, it will neither promote mine safety nor bring any other benefits, but on the contrary will be a deadening blow to the national economy and the ultimate ruin of all."

MINERS CLEANING PITS SO THEY CAN REOPEN MONDAY

Union Official Says He Is Co-operating With Management in Preparing to Resume Work.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 3

By a Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 3—While most Illinois coal miners are observing the Holy Week mourning period prescribed by John L. Lewis, a few men, in each of a considerable number of mines, are cleaning up the properties in preparation for general resumption of work next Monday.

Hugh White, president of District 12, United Mine Workers, who announced Monday that the union members would not return to work until the mines were reported completely safe, said today that he was co-operating with the operators in the clean-up undertaking.

White said he had called the six members of the district board, each representing a subdistrict, and had directed them to see that the mine operators got all the men they desired for the clean-up jobs. White said several of the operators had called him for permission to have this cleaning work done, and that he was giving full co-operation.

Just how many mines were being cleaned, and how many men were thus employed, White said he could not tell without making a canvass of all the employment centers.

The work being done, he said, is chiefly rock dusting, and moving of accumulated dust to the haulage ways for removal. Asked whether this would leave the mines in safe condition, White said: "I don't know; I'm not a mine inspector."

BILL PROPOSED TO PERMIT FEDERAL INSPECTORS TO CLOSE UNSAFE COAL MINES

WASHINGTON, April 1 (AP).

LEGISLATION to empower federal inspectors to close coal mines they deem unsafe was introduced today by Representative Landis (Rep.), Indiana. He told the House that "it is the duty of Congress to put some 'teeth' in our Federal Mine Inspection Act. Coal mines operating in violation of safety codes should be closed for the protection of the miners."

The bill he introduced, he said, would authorize a federal inspector, whenever he "finds that the operation of a mine is endangering the lives of the employes," to close it "until pronounced safe by federal authority."

Under the mine safety code worked out by the Government and the miners after federal seizure of the mines last May 29, the coal mines administrator is required to "take appropriate action" in cases of violation. This action, the agreement states, "may include disciplining or replacing the operating manager."

400,000 MINERS BEGIN SIX-DAY WORK STOPPAGE LEWIS ORDERED

Anthracite Shafts Closed Also as Other Workers Observe Winning of 8-Hour Day — 34,000 Walk Out Early.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 1

WASHINGTON, April 1 (AP)—John L. Lewis's United Mine Workers quit their soft-coal pits today, beginning a six-day stoppage to memoralize the deaths of 111 Centralia (Ill.) miners.

The 400,000 AFL union members began the mourning period at one minute after midnight, starting on the East Coast and extending to the Pacific through the time zones.

All was quiet in the nation's anthracite mines, too, because today is a traditional miners' holiday, celebrating the winning of the eight-hour day in 1898. In some places the anniversary is known as Mitchell day, after the UMW president at the time. Even the rival independent Progressive Mine Workers of America observes the holiday.

Memorial services were the main parts of mining community programs today, however.

Industry Unperturbed.

Industry, in the main, seemed unperturbed. No coal-dependent firms were expected to curtail production. Lewis's timing of the "holiday" comes in a period when little coal is brought to the surface.

Miners do not work April 1, and few work on Holy Thursday or Good Friday. Saturday normally is a day off. Wednesday, then, is the only day in which full production is lost, miners assert.

One coal executive, however, disputed this. James D. Francis, president of the Island Creek Coal Co., at Huntington, W. Va., insisted, "We will lose a normal week's tonnage with the exception of Monday.

"Production during the Holy Week for the last seven years has been normal except for two years—1941 and 1946—when there were strikes. And there were no slowdowns on Thursday, Friday and Saturday."

John D. Battle, executive secretary of the National Coal Association, also asserted reports that the work stoppage would have little effect on coal production "are without foundation." He estimated at least 8,000,000 tons of coal will be lost in the six-day period and said that "in the final analysis, this is just another coal strike under another name."

The Solid Fuels Administration said 34,619 miners began the holiday early, quitting work yesterday and forcing 89 mines to close. The agency estimated the day's shutdown resulted in a production loss of 252,713 tons.

The SFA said that a check today showed 331,173 soft coal miners idle and 3721 mines closed east of the Mississippi. It estimated today's production loss at 2,020,805 tons. Only 499 mines, employing 14,585 workers, are working in the region east of the Mississippi, it was said. Most of these mines are non-union.

The biggest stoppage came in Illinois, where 22 United Mine Workers mines and 28 Progressive mines closed, resulting in an estimated production loss of 138,000 tons. The number of Illinois miners who quit was 15,685.

Congress Pushing Inquiry.

Meantime there were positive indications that Congress was pushing its investigation of mine conditions under federal operation.

Secretary of Interior Krug, working on a report to the Senate investigating committee, indicated it may be submitted some time in the day.

Lewis will testify before a House Labor subcommittee Thursday on the Centralia explosion and the six-day period of mourning.

Representative Schwabe (Rep.), Missouri, subcommittee chairman, told reporters Lewis "will be allowed to give his version of the affair and say anything he wishes in connection with Centralia disaster and the miners' holiday."

Schwabe said Krug and other Government officials will be invited to testify later.

Officials of the Solid Fuels Administration declined to express an opinion on whether the miners would return to the pits after the six-day mourning observance.

If the stoppage continued through next Monday, would it be considered a violation of a Supreme Court mandate?

That remained a big question—and SFA officials had no answer.

At Dillonvale, O., Adolph Pacifico, president of District 6 of the United Mine Workers, today instructed members of the union to remain out of mines they considered unsafe.

Pacifico, speaking at a memorial service, said: "I will instruct the safety committees (of each union local) if any emergency arises to withdraw the men and remain out until adjustments are made."

He then proceeded to issue the instructions in his district, which embraces Ohio and the West Virginia Panhandle.

The Supreme Court ordered Lewis to withdraw an order for a stoppage that was to have begun last midnight—the same time as the ordered memorial period.

When he complied, a $3,500,000 fine levied against the union for contempt of court in connection with last fall's 17-day strike was reduced to $700,000.

KRUG SAYS MINE MANAGER GAVE MISLEADING DATA ON PIT'S SAFETY CONDITIONS

Asserts Two Reports by U.S. Inspector Did Not Warrant Emergency Closing of Centralia Shaft.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 3

By GEORGE H. HALL
A Washington Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

WASHINGTON, April 3—Secretary of the Interior J. A. Krug has told the Senate Committee investigating the Centralia (Ill.) mine explosion that neither the November nor the March report of a federal inspector warned of danger sufficient to have warranted emergency closing of the mine.

He said also the Coal Mines Administrator, between the November and March reports, sought information of the mine management as to progress made in complying with the safety recommendations and that it was evident from the inspection report the data submitted by the "operating manager" was misleading.

The "operating manager" was not named. However, in the Administrator's office the recorded operating manager for the Federal Government is H. F. McDonald, president of the Centralia Coal Co.

McDonald was formerly in charge of the Bell & Zoller company's St. Louis sales office in the Boatmen's Bank building. Later he became general sales manager of the company.

Krug's report was sent yesterday to Senator Cordon (Rep.), Oregon, chairman of a special committee appointed to investigate the blast that took 111 lives in the Centralia Coal Co.'s No. 5 mine last March 25. The committee was scheduled to begin hearings today in Centralia.

The report was not made public but the Post-Dispatch learned from Senate sources who had an opportunity to examine it, the general nature of the document and many of the statements it contains.

Two of Krug's major points are that he received many complaints under the Krug-Lewis agreement but never had a complaint from any of the officers of the United Mine Workers about the Centralia mine, and that the union's mine safety committee at the Centralia pit never communicated with his department about conditions despite the fact the members had access to the federal reports.

Resume of Krug's Letter.

What follows is a resume of Krug's letter to Cordon as it was given the Post-Dispatch:

Krug began with a brief summary of the disaster, saying the explosion took place at 3:27 p.m. There were 142 men in the mine, some on their way to the surface. The Bureau of Mines was notified at 5 p.m. the same day, March 25. By the following day 12 bureau employes and six employes of the Coal Mines Administration were at Centralia. The cause of the blast was not known.

The first inspection of the mine for compliance with the federal mine safety code began Nov. 4. Copies of the report resulting from this inspection were sent to a number of designated recipients, including the Coal Mines Administration, the state inspection authorities, the district and national UMW offices and the Centralia Coal Co. They were also posted at the mine.

No Imminent Danger Found.

Neither the preliminary report nor the final report of the November inspection found "imminent danger." Despite the fact the union complained of poor safety conditions in other mines, neither the union's safety committee at the Centralia mine nor any representative of the union, discussed conditions at Centralia with Krug's department.

The November report listed 61 items of noncompliance (the Post-Dispatch count was 60). Nineteen were said by the Bureau of Mines to be of major importance.

Last Nov. 25 and 29, Krug said, the Coal Mines Administrator directed the operating manager of the mine to comply with the November recommendations. On Jan. 25, Feb. 21 and March 7 the Administrator asked for information about what the manager was doing to comply. On Nov. 30, Feb. 10 and Feb. 24 the manager outlined what progress he was making in complying with the recommendations.

As a check to determine the actual progress of the operator, a second inspection was made March 17 to 20, and copies of the resulting preliminary report were sent to all the interested persons. Again, the report did not suggest "imminent danger."

The final report of the second inspection was not completed and delivered until three days after the explosion. This indicated 55 items of the code were being violated, 52 being the same that were in violation in November (the Post-Dispatch counted 51) and three being new ones. Sixteen of the items were regarded as of major importance.

The inspection report showed that the operating manager's statements were misleading and the Coal Mines Administration did not have the opportunity to take action because the explosion occurred before it received the March reports.

The federal inspector was accompanied in November and March by an Illinois State mine inspector, who made up and posted his own report. Krug did not see this but understood it did not find "imminent danger."

The authority for the Bureau of Mines to make inspections is derived from an act passed in 1941. Subject to this act are about 3550 mines. Each is inspected at least once a year, some oftener. Every effort is made to get participation of labor and management in the inspection and in subsequent procedure.

The Bureau of Mines has no legal authority for enforcing its recommendations except under the temporary arrangement by which the Government is operating the mines and which must end by June 30.

The responsibilities of the Government under this, the Krug-Lewis agreement, were noted in last Sunday's Post-Dispatch. Briefly, the Administrator can replace an operating manager for failure to comply with safety recommendations.

The federal mine safety code, formulated by Dr. R. R. Sayers, director of the Bureau of Mines, was drawn up under the Krug-Lewis agreement. This code calls for mine inspections by the bureau. Its articles include this statement:

"In those special cases where a federal coal mine inspector finds an imminent danger exists, he shall take immediate action, through the operating manager or his representative, to have all workmen withdrawn from the unsafe area until such danger is corrected."

The inspector also is required to notify the director of the Bureau of Mines by telephone of imminent and serious danger, and the Coal Mines Administrator, upon being notified, is required to take action immediately. Otherwise, the procedure of inspection, notification, checks on compliance with recommendations and reinspection is followed.

It was recognized by the negotiators of the Krug-Lewis agreement that it was impossible for the 180 federal mine inspectors to visit the approximately 2300 mines in Government possession often enough to be certain of prompt detection of "imminent danger." It was thought even minimum safety standards could be reached only through full co-operation of labor and management and that with the increased rights of labor there should be increased responsibility.

Therefore it was provided in the agreement that a mine safety committee be selected by the local union. This committee, briefly, can force the removal of men from mine areas it thinks to be exceptionally dangerous unless the committee's decision is overruled by the Coal Mines Administrator.

Inspection of mines and enforcement of safety regulations has always been a state responsibility and except for the temporary Krug-Lewis pact of last May 29 it has been the only responsibility.

The safety code, prepared with the assistance of the United Mine Workers, has raised substantially the standards of safety in the mines in Government possession. Many requirements necessitate purchase of equipment and long-range changes in miners' working habits. It was understood that many improvements could not be made at once, so it was provided in the code that where equipment could not be obtained immediately the requirement that it be installed was suspended.

Ventilating Equipment.

For example, at present, delivery of mining machinery takes from six months to a year and it takes a similar length of time to obtain and install ventilating equipment.

As of last March 24 the Bureau of Mines had reported inspections of 1582 mines in government possession. A total of about 42,700 violations of the code were noted, or an average of 27 violations per mine. These "violations" are more in the nature of deficiencies, since they refer usually to deficiencies from standards set by the code, and it was not expected that all these standards could be met at once.

Only two of the mines met all the requirements of the code.

In 31 cases, according to Coal Mines Administration records, local mine safety committees of the UMW took action under provisions of the code. Twice the committee called the men out of the mines.

In each of the 31 cases a federal inspection was made to evaluate the extent of the dangers reported by the committees. In seven of the 31 the inspectors found management had not failed to comply. In the other 24 the conditions were corrected to the satisfaction of the committees and the inspectors. The Centralia mine was not one of those in which this action was taken.

Last Nov. 7 the UMW specifically asked the Coal Mines Administration to seek strict compliance with the code with regard to gas inspections, faulty ventilation and pre-shift mine examinations. Operating managers were so instructed and there were no more complaints.

Krug on Responsibility.

Krug contended it would be impossible to place responsibility until the cause of the explosion is established. He repeated that every one—management, labor, federal and state authorities—had known since November of the code violations.

He assumed full responsibility for the administration of the Coal Mines Administration and the Bureau of Mines, which are in the Interior Department, but noted that the owners of the mine, the Union Safety Committee and the state officials had the same facts as the Interior Department and did not find "imminent danger" or close the mine.

Krug advised Cordon that in placing responsibility the committee should remember that failure to comply with code, even in "major" instances, was not in itself enough to cause the mine to be shut down. The code insists only that "compliance be started promptly and prosecuted diligently until the provisions of the code have been fulfilled."

MEDILL ADMITS AT SENATE INQUIRY LUG ON OWNERS BY MINE INSPECTORS

Testifies He Expected $15,000 to $25,000 for Chicago Election, but Only From Republican Operators.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 4

By SELWYN PEPPER
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 4 — Solicitation of political funds from mine owners, by state mine inspectors in his department, was admitted today by Robert M. Medill, who resigned Tuesday as director of the Illinois State Department of Mines and Minerals. Medill, who quit under a barrage of criticism in connection with the non-enforcement of safety regulations at the Centralia Coal Co. Mine No. 5, where 111 miners were killed last week, testified today before the United States Senate subcommittee investigating the disaster.

The Illinois political "lug" on coal operators had been disclosed exclusively in the Post-Dispatch six days before the disaster.

Medill's admission came in the midst of a hearing at which the Senate subcommittee chairman, Senator Guy Cordon (Rep.), Oregon, declared the mine tragedy had followed a "clear record" of failure of both state and federal mine agencies to carry out the safety recommendations of mine inspectors.

William E. Rowekamp, recording secretary of the United Mine Workers local at the Centralia mine today produced a letter signed with the name of Gov. Dwight H. Green of Illinois, dated March 14, 1946, and acknowledging receipt by the Governor of the miners' complaint. They had written begging the Governor to "save our lives" by enforcing safety regulations at the mine.

"I am calling your letter to the attention of the Director of the Department of Mines and Minerals," the letter said in part, "and I am asking that full consideration be given it at the next meeting of the Mine Board."

At Springfield, meanwhile, John William Chapman, secretary to Gov. Green, told the Post-Dispatch he had sent the letter to Medill directly, without showing it to Gov. Green, then on vacation in Florida.

Rowekamp also told the Senators he had met Gov. Green in Centralia since the mine disaster and complained about the fact that no action was taken on the letter.

"The Governor told me that if the Department o Mines didn't act, he couldn't help it," the mine union officer declared.

When Medill was on the stand, earlier today, he was asked by Senator Gordon about the meeting of state mine inspectors called by Medill, at which they were alleged to have been instructed to make political fund collections from mine operators.

"I did call such a meeting last Jan. 31," Medill admitted. "I told my employes we had an election coming up in Chicago, and that while I had not been instructed by anyone to solicit funds, I was a Republican and had been all my life. As such I was greatly interested in helping wipe out the Kelly-Nash machine in Chicago and the New Deal in Washington.

"I told them: 'I don't want you to put any pressure on anyone, but I personally am going to make a contribution and if you find anyone among your friends willing to contribute, tell them to send their checks to me.'"

Senator Cordon then asked if Medill had suggested his inspectors solicit coal operators.

"No, sir," answered Medill. He said when one inspector had asked if he should see a certain coal operator Medill had replied, "I'm not telling you to see anyone. This must be strictly voluntary. No pressure must be applied."

Denies Approaching Peabody.

With reference to testimony before the subcommittee yesterday that Medill had told his mine inspectors he would get in touch with the big Peabody Coal Co. for contributions for the Chicago campaign fund, Medill said: "I would be foolish to ask the Peabody people for contributions because they have been among the largest contributors to the Democratic party in Chicago for many years."

Chairman Cordon asked Medill: "What about this even graver charge by State Mine Inspector Driscoll Scanlan to the effect that you said, 'We've been good to those people' (the mine operators)?"

"I did say," Medill replied, "that Mr. McPhail, a mine company official (not further identified), and his associates had been friendly to us, but I didn't say our department had helped them."

Pressing the witness, Cordon asked if Medill did not agree with him that a request to operators for campaign funds would be "reprehensible in the highest degree."

"Yes, sir," said Medill.

Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney (Dem.), Wyoming, then took up the questioning, asking: "What reason did you have for thinking the operators would contribute?"

"I expected contributions only from Republican owned mines," Medill declared. "I put the word out only to operators who were friendly to me. I called on a friend in Chicago and asked him for a contribution."

The witness was not asked to identify this "friend."

It was elicited from Medill by O'Mahoney that when the mine inspectors were summoned to Springfield last Jan. 31 to discuss collections for the Chicago campaign fund they were traveling on state-paid time and state expense accounts.

"I told those boys," Medill went on, "to call only on their friends, such as drug store owners, clothing store owners, attorneys, and the state's attorney and sheriff of the county.

"Did you tell them to exclude the operators?" O'Mahoney demanded.

"No," said Medill.

"How much did you expect to raise?"

"Between $15,000 and $25,000. I did this entirely on my own responsibility and I accept full responsibility for it."

"Did any coal operators contribute?"

"I have good reason to believe the operators were visited by the inspectors—among others, the Lumaghi Coal Co. in St. Louis."

As has been told in the Post-Dispatch, Louis F. Lumaghi Jr. of St. Louis, who operates a mine near Collinsville, declined to donate and on March 15 wrote a protest to Medill, saying the district mine inspector had called to seek a contribution, saying he did this at Medill's instruction.

Earlier in the hearing Medill had denied, blandly, that he had ever received a request from Scanlan that the Centralia mine be closed. Pressed repeatedly by Senator O'Mahoney, however, he was asked: "Didn't you overrule Scanlan?"

"I don't remember," Medill replied.

Medill insisted the only power to enforce safety compliance by mine operators lay with the inspectors themselves.

"The State Mine Board never failed to carry out recommendations by inspectors," he declared.

"What, if anything, did you or your department do to bring about the compliance of the operators of this mine with the safety recommendations of Scanlan, which you indorsed repeatedly?" Senator O'Mahoney asked.

"We expected Scanlan and all inspectors to follow up their recommendations," Medill replied.

"Three things stand out in all these reports by Scanlan," O'Mahoney then declared. "From the earliest examination of the mine the need for improved ventilation was clear. Also, the recommendation for rock dusting and for cleaning out excess dust from the mine.

"These things were recommended over and over and over again—to within a few days before the explosion, when the inspections showed that not one of the recommendations had been taken care of."

"Have you ever refused to concur with Scanlan in any matter concerning mine safety?" Medill was asked.

"No, sir," he answered.

"Have you ever ordered Scanlan to refrain from taking action?"

"No, sir," Medill repeated.

Condition Existed 15 Years.

Senator Cordon, however, declared that "there are indications here that in view of the continued violation of safety rules the State Mine Board should have directed Scanlan to take further action. Why wasn't this done?"

"The same condition had existed in the mine for 15 years," Medill replied. "If I were the inspector, I would have shut that mine down."

"Doesn't that obligation also rest on the Mine Board?" Senator Cordon asked.

"The board wasn't as close to the situation as the inspector," Medill replied.

"Hadn't Scanlan taken up the question of closing the mine with you?"

"No, sir," Medill again replied.

"Mr. Medill," Senator Cordon remarked at this point, "I'd like to have you be perfectly frank with us."

Senator Henry Dworshak (Rep.), Idaho, the third member of the subcommittee, present at hearings today for the first time, asked if union mine safety committees did not have joint responsibility for mine safety with the State Department of Mines, under the Krug-Lewis agreement.

"Yes, sir," answered Medill.

"I want to know where responsibility for mine safety lies," Senator Dworshak continued.

"Primarily with the mine inspectors, and also with the coal mine safety committees," Medill said.

The dust hazard in the Centralia mine was about the same as in some other Illinois mines, Medill said. He admitted Scanlan's reports were "more severe" than those of other inspectors. He did not comment on Cordon's remark that "I would think the Mine Board would adopt some procedure to deal with that hazard."

Senator Cordon continued that he "could understand why it was desirable to keep mines in operation during the war," but couldn't understand why safety measures weren't enforced after the end of the war. Medill promised to send the Senate Public Lands Committee subcommittee a list of mines closed for noncompliance since 1941. Medill could remember only two such instances

—By a Post-Dispatch Staff Photographer.

ROBERT M. MEDILL, former director of the Illinois Department of Mines and Minerals, who resigned under fire last Tuesday, testifying today before the Senate subcommittee investigating the Centralia mine disaster.

At yesterday's hearing, William A. Gallagher, United States Bureau of Mines official and a member of the Governor's fact-finding commission, admitted that William P. Young, operating head of the Centralia Coal Co., should have been removed by the Federal Coal Mines Administrator for failure to comply with safety regulations.

John Lorenzini, one of the 31 survivors of the disaster, also repeated his story of the event. He added, however, that three days before the explosion, a worked-out room at the mine had caved in, creating an unusual amount of dust along the haulage way. This information had not been given to the fact-finding committee.

Criticism by Senator.

During the hearing, Chairman Cordon remarked: "The record is clear. There was no insistence on the part of either the state or federal government agencies that the recommendations of the inspectors be carried out. The men in the field appear to have done a good job, but somewhere along the line of authority enforcement failed."

Gallagher, supervising Federal mines inspector with headquarters at Vincennes, Ind., had testified reluctantly, under oath, concerning the lack of adequate mine safety enforcement action. He was questioned sharply by members of the Senate subcommittee.

The Bureau of Mines official said he had not recommended removal of the operating head of the Centralia mine because he did not consider conditions in the mine an "imminent hazard" despite reports by federal mine inspectors who found some 51 violations of the mine safety code, less than a week before the explosion.

Used Wrong Yardstick.

"What kind of a yardstick do you use to measure the difference between a hazard and an imminent hazard?" Gallagher was asked by Senator Cordon.

"In this case," Gallagher conceded, "we didn't use a proper yardstick."

Gallagher was called as a witness by the Senate subcommittee after the Governor's fact-finding commission, of which he is a member, had completed its hearings in Centralia.

He attempted to evade pointed questions by Senator Cordon and Senator O'Mahoney, but was finally pinned down to specific answers after fencing for nearly half an hour. Questioning of witnesses in the Senate hearing was considerably more vigorous than in the Governor's fact-finding commission hearings, where witnesses were not put under oath.

Gallagher did not name Young when he said the Federal Coal Mines Administrator should have removed the operating head of the mine. There was no doubt to whom he was referring, however; Young, president of the associated Bell & Zoller Coal Mining Corp. and vice president of the Centralia Mining Co., was present at the hearing, listening intently.

One Operator Removed.

The power of the Coal Mines Administrator to remove a mine operator, under the Krug-Lewis agreement, was not put in question. Gallagher admitted that at least one operator, in West Virginia, had been removed for failure to comply with the safety code.

In the case of the Centralia mine, Senator O'Mahoney asked, "If you were the Coal Mines Administrator would you have replaced the mine manager here for failure to correct the violations?"

"Yes," said Gallagher finally, after evading the question earlier. Then he added, "But it is very seldom that management won't cooperate."

"Would you," asked Senator Cordon, "have said to the manager: 'You do this and this by a certain time or I'll discipline or remove you?'"

"Yes, I would have done that," Gallagher replied

"Why did'nt you take action here?" Senator O'Mahoney asked.

"There was no imminent hazard," Gallagher replied. "I didn't recommend disciplinary action."

"But,' pursued the senator, removing his pince-nez, "you were much closer to the sceno than anyone in Washington."

"I agree to that," Gallagher answered. He moved, uncomfortably, in his seat.

Gallagher said he considered conditions in the Centralia mine "hazardous, but not imminently hazardous. We've been working under those conditions for years. A dust hazard is never considered an imminent hazard except where there is a large quantity of gas." Other witnesses had testified the danger of a dust explosion is greater when inflammable methane gas also is present in a mine.

When gas or other "imminent hazard" is found in a mine Gallagher explained, "we inform the director of the Bureau of Mines and he takes it up with the Coal Mines Administrator, who has the power of enforcement.

"But we've never had a situation like that in this district."

MANSLAUGHTER INDICTMENTS TO BE SOUGHT IN GRAND JURY INQUIRY INTO MINE DISASTER

ACTION EXPECTED TO BE CENTERED ON EXECUTIVES, OWNERS OF PIT

State's Attorney Hohlt Says He Will Try to Build Case of Criminal Negligence — Prosecution of Medill in Doubt.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 4

By HARRY WILENSKY
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 4— Manslaughter indictments based on criminal negligence will be sought by State's Attorney Wilbert J. Hohlt in the Washington county grand jury's investigation of the mine explosion that took 111 lives March 25, the Post-Dispatch was told today.

It would appear that the prosecution most likely will center on the mine owners and executives. Whether an indictment could be obtained against Robert M. Medill, who resigned under fire Tuesday as director of the State Department of Mines, is debatable.

The Illinois criminal code fixes the penalty for manslaughter, voluntary or involuntary, at one year to 14 years' imprisonment. The code defines involuntary manslaughter in these words:

"Involuntary manslaughter shall consist in the killing of a human being without any intent to do so, in the commission of an unlawful act or a lawful act, which probably might produce such a consequence, in an unlawful manner."

No "Teeth" in Mine Laws.

Hohlt's decision to base prosecution on the general manslaughter statute, rather than on the laws relating to mining, was due, he said, to the lack of "teeth" in the mining laws. To depend on the latter, he said, would be "like shooting quail with a cap pistol."

Section 60 of the General Mining laws limits penalties for non-compliance as follows: "Any wilful neglect, refusal or failure to obey the requirements or provisions of this act—shall be deemed a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of not less than $50, and not to exceed $200, or by imprisonment in the county jail for a period not exceeding three months, or both, in the discretion of the court."

Hohlt said he would seek to make a case strong enough to support the charge of manslaughter. Other lawyers pointed out that prosecution along this line would face serious obstacles, and the state's attorney himself made no effort to minimize the difficulties.

With no premeditation involved, murder is ruled out. No one charges intention, so voluntary manslaughter is out, leaving the involuntary crime, Hohlt said.

"For manslaughter, you must have some affirmative action," Hohlt said. Most of the evidence thus far presented to the investigating committee deals with failure to act, rather than affirmative steps. On the other hand, criminal negligence would constitute one of the elements of manslaughter, it was pointed out.

Reports in which State Mine Inspector Driscoll Scanlan repeatedly pointed out operating hazards in the Centralia Coal Co.'s Mine No. 5, and recommended corrective steps, would lay the groundwork on which a case of manslaughter might be built, Hohlt said.

Gov. Dwight H. Green has stated he never saw the letter of March 3, 1946, in which a group of Centralia miners begged him to "please save our lives" by making the State Department of Mines and Minerals enforce safety regulations in the mine. Green said he was out of the state at the time and that the letter was forwarded by his office to Director Medill.

William P. Young is vice president of the Centralia Coal Co., and operating head of the mining property.

H. F. McDonald, president of the company, is in the Chicago office and is concerned chiefly with sales; however, he has a nominal responsibility for the property.

Walter J. Johnson, general superintendent, had chief charge of day-to-day management.

William H. Brown is underground foreman with the title of superintendent.

H. C. Niermann is assistant superintendent.

Hohlt is a member of the fact-finding committee of seven, appointed by the Governor, which completed its inquiry here yesterday after a descent into the mine. The state's attorney insists that serving on the Governor's committee will not impair his usefulness in the grand jury investigation. On the contrary, he believes it will help the county inquiry, in that he will have a comprehensive background on the disaster, and will have thoroughly familiarized himself with the various phases, by the time the grand jury convenes.

"If I thought the report by the Governor's fact-finding committee might handcuff me in any way, I'd write a dissenting finding," he said.

Prosecutor in Mine Inquiry

—By a Post-Dispatch Staff Photographer.

WILBERT J. HOHLT
State's Attorney of Washington County, Ill., who will seek manslaughter indictments against men responsible for the Centralia mine disaster. Hohlt was photographed as he went into the mine Wednesday, wearing a miner's cap, with Gov. Green's investigating committee.

In 1944, Gallagher continued, he accompanied a federal inspector to the Centralia mine, but found "nothing there to warrant removal of the men." As for the report by Inspector Frank Pers, pointing out numerous safety violations, Gallagher said, "that report was ordinary as far as we're concerned."

Senator O'Mahoney, turning twinkling eyes on the witness, asked, "Do you think this mine should be reopened without corrections?"

Gallagher declined to express an opinion, explaining that Bureau of Mines employes were investigating inside the mine and had not yet determined the cause of ignition in the explosion.

Questioned About Power.

Senator Cordon asked: "Before the seizure of the mines by the Government, you had no power to cure violations, is that right?"

"We had the power of persuasion," Gallagher replied.

"Then you were powerless in the field of coercion?"

"Yes."

"If you had had the power," the Senator continued, "would you have forced compliance with recommendations of your inspector for correction of safety violations?"

Without answering directly, Gallagher replied: "The work required would have taken time. Eventually all conditions would have been complied with. There are 87 recommendations in that report (the Post-Dispatch had counted 51 in the final Federal report) and 13 compliances. In most mines there are 35 to 100 violations."

"Let's get down to specific cases," Senator O'Mahoney insisted. "You said before you would have required immediate compliance. With which provisions?"

When the witness would not specify, O'Mahoney asked, "How about the methods of blasting?" Gallagher answered that that "could not have been complied with immediately." Then O'Mahoney pointed out that one recommendation for the mine was the use of electric detonators.

"I would not have required immediate compliance with that," Gallagher asserted, then asked his questioner, "What is your interpretation of immediate?"

"All I'm trying to do," replied the unruffled Senator, "is get you to specify. The Bureau of Mines has been given consireable money to train miners. As a result, conditions have improved. Now a new law has been recommended to give the bureau new power to prevent such disasters as befell the people of Centralia. What powers would you recommend?"

On more familiar ground now, Gallagher responded: "Mine workers must be taken care of as far as safety is concerned. State law doesn't stop hazards. Laws must be passed to protect those men."

Gallagher insisted the Centralia mine management was trying to correct hazards. "Do you believe," O'Mahoney asked, "that the management of this mine was so culpable that they should have been disciplined?"

By way of reply, Gallagher said, "The time element is important. Only two mines in the United States comply with the federal safety code."

Then, in answer to a question as to whether corrections were being made at the Centralia mine, he said, "They were correcting some things. They are better than average. If the Coal Mines Administration feels that the work of remedying conditions is not proceeding fast enough, I feel they should leave everybody go. In that case, all over the United States everybody in charge of mines would go."

Scanlan's Testimony.

Scanlan took the stand to tell the senators of his early efforts to have excessive dust eliminated—and his lack of success. He repeated much of his earlier testimony, before the fact-finding commission, regarding his difficulty in getting Medill to take a serious view of this question.

Scanlan repeated his statement that Medill had declared they would "just have to take that chance," when told of the danger of a dust explosion.

After Scanlan, on his own authority, had issued an ultimatum to the mine to clean up or close down, in May 1945, he said conditions were greatly improved for a few months. By December of that year, he said, however, that the mine was dirty as ever.

"The exceedingly dry coal being dug at that time produced such dust that I recommended the use of water or a wetting solution on the cutting machine, the coal loaders and the coal falls," the witness resumed. "That could be done by equipping the machines with tanks and pumps and by installing a sprinkler system."

Could Have Used Priority.

Senator Cordon inquired if such equipment was then available, to which Scanlan replied, "This was wartime and the coal companies had priorities. They would have had an easier time getting pipe then than now."

The recommendation was turned over by the State Mining Board, he said, to a commission which visited the mine but failed to concur with Scanlan's recommendations for the wetting equipment but did agree with him on certain recommendations for improved ventilation and rock dusting.

At the evening session, it was developed from Scanlan's testimony that the Union's Safety Committee had twice asked Medill to revoke the certificates of competeney of the man then general superintendent, Norman Prudent and William H. Brown, mine manager who has since become underground foreman. The first request came in April 1945, when it was charged that Brown permitted a face boss to order shots fired while miners were still in the mine, contrary to the state law. It was also charged the miners were ordered to go into the room and commence work before the room had been examined after the shots.

Scanlan said this complaint had been "smoothed over" in some manner by Robert Weir, assistant director of the State Department of Mines and Minerals. The second complaint, according to Scanlan, was addressed to Medill on Dec. 17, 1945, charging that Brown and Prudent had failed to follow out the recommendations of Scanlan with respect to ventilation and timbering. This request was considered by the Commission appointed by the State Mining Board and rejected, Scanlan said.

Report Read Into Record.

Senator Cordon read into the record a copy of Scanlan's report of his inspection on March 16 to 19, 1947, his last before the explosion. The report again called for more adequate ventilation, cleaning up certain haulage roads, putting the underground machine shop in safer condition and timbering parts of the mine. It called for "adequate rockdusting of the mine" and urged that all previous recommendations not complied with be taken care of.

Senator Cordon wanted to know whether, if the wetting equipment and rock-dusting had been instituted and there had been a local explosion of any kind, the loss of life would have been minimized. Scanlan replied, "Absolutely yes. Probably not a man would have been lost or, at least, the fatalities would have been confined to the immediate area."

Scanlan refused to express an opinion on the cause of the primary explosion that set off the coal dust blast until he had had a better opportunity to inspect the mine. He promised to appear again on this point before the subcommittee later today.

Hoped for Improvement.

Responding to a question by Senator O'Mahoney, Scanlan said conditions in the mine on his last inspection had been somewhat better and "I went away from my first interview with the new general superintendent, Walter J. Johnson, with the feeling that things were at last on their way to correction." There was rock dust on hand and he had been promised a sprinkler system.

All the time, he said, these improvements, at least most of them, could have been put into effect earlier. He pointed out that all during the war a rock quarry at Valmeyer, Ill., was able to supply all the rock dust needed.

Scanlan confessed disappointment at the failure of the State Mining Board Commission of December 1945 to concur with his recommendations.

"I didn't expect Weir or the operators' representative on the commission to agree with me," he said, "but I was hurt when the union representative and the two state mining inspectors went against me, too."

The witness explained the last reprimand he received from Medill over the comprehensiveness of his reports was in March 1946, during examinations at Springfield.

"Medill called us all in and told us to cut down on the length of our reports and to quit using such long words," he said. "He said Bob Weir was having trouble understanding them and had had to resort to the dictionary several times." The Senators joined in the general laughter.

Freedom From Politics Urged.

Scanlan said every mine in Illinois "should be closed down until it is properly rock-dusted." He also told the subcommittee:

"Unless something is done to take the mine inspection department out of politics and to give the federal inspectors power to enforce their recommendations, there are going to be more of these disasters. Some people say an occurence like this is an act of God. I say that it is an act of God that we haven't had many more of them with the condition the mines are in." The audience applauded the remarks.

Taking up the question of politics in mine inspection, Scanlan said he would have been discharged some time ago if he hadn't had a sponsor in Representative R. J. Branson of Centralia and a good friend in Hugh White, president of the Illinois United Mine Workers.

Pressed to give instances in which political pressure had been brought on inspectors, he said that Inspector James Wilson had been derived of jurisdiction over coal mines of Peabody Coal Co. and Old Ben Coal Co. in Franklin county because Wilson wanted the mines cleaned up. Asked to name the source of his information, Scanlan gave the name of Elmer Edmonds, the inspector who took over inspection of those mines from Wilson. He quoted Edmonds as saying the Peabody No. 18 near West Frankfort was so hazardous that he, Edmonds, was afraid to go into it himself.

When asked by Senator O'Mahoney if he had ever engaged in political activity while an inspector, Scanlan replied that he had campaigned for party candidates and handed out cards at elections. Asked if he had ever solicited campaign contributions, he said, "No, but I have made personal contributions myself."

The audience was amused by O'Mahoney's quick reply, "that's no crime."

Scanlan then detailed the now familiar story of the "lug" which Medill asked his inspectors to put on the coal operators to finance the Republican mayoralty race in Chicago.

At the conclusion of the story, after Scanlan told of refusing to solicit the operators in his district, Senator Cordon remarked, "The request was reprehensible in itself in that it was directed by the state officer toward those he was expected to hold accountable for violations of the mining laws But did you ever receive any intimation that you were expected to be lenient toward those who did contribute?"

The witness said the only such intimation he had received was contained in Medill's remarks when he proposed the lug, "that the operators had been favored by this department."

When asked if he knew whether Bell & Zoller Coal Co. had made a contribution to Medill's fund, the witness said he didn't think so for the reason that when he went up to the Centralia mine the day following the Post-Dispatch's exposure of the "shakedown" some of the men in the wash room there started kidding him and asking him if he was out to collect some money.

"I told the boys, 'you better see that your company's skirts are clean before you do so much kidding.' The master mechanic said he didn't believe Bell & Zoller had done so because they didn't contribute to his book deal."

When Senator O'Mahoney demanded the details of the "book deal" Scanlan laughed and replied, "You're going to keep me on this stand all night." He then said that Medill had induced some of the coal operators to finance the publication of a booklet he had prepared showing the work of the department.

"Medill later wanted us to sell the book to the miners and split the commissions with him," Scanlan concluded.

Runaround Is Charged.

Returning to his efforts to get safety measures taken in the mine, Scanlan said he had been referred from one company official to another and finally to officials in Chicago. His superiors in the Department of Mines, Scanlan said, had "failed to follow up" his efforts.

As he left the stand there was a prolonged applause from the audience, mainly made up of miners and relatives of those killed in the Centralia disaster.

U.S. CLOSES 518 MINES BELIEVED UNSAFE

2013 OTHER PITS MAY REOPEN AT END OF STOPPAGE IF CERTIFIED SAFE

40,000 Miners Affected by Shutdown—Action by Krug Follows Reports That Industry Fears 'Safety Strike.'

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 3

WASHINGTON, April 3 (AP) — Secretary of the Interior Krug today directed that 518 Government-operated soft coal mines remain closed indefinitely because they are believed to be dangerous.

Krug said the 2013 other mines under federal control could reopen Monday at the conclusion of the six-day "mourning" period called by John L. Lewis for miners killed in the Centralia (Ill.) disaster if the "operating managers certify that they have reviewed safety conditions and practices and that there is no imminent danger to the men working in those mines."

Almost 40,000 miners are employed at the 518 mines which Krug said are "believed dangerous from an explosion point of view." This is roughly a tenth of the miners employed in bituminous pits. The Interior Department estimates the 518 mines produce 350,000 tons of coal a day. Normal production of all mines is about 2,100,000 tons a day.

The 518 pits will be closed until certified by the local union's mine safety committee and the operating managers or until new inspections determine that they are "reasonably safe."

Krug said a review of inspection reports did not indicate unduly hazardous conditions in 2013 mines. He directed an immediate re-examination of safety conditions and practices along with consideration of any federal or state inspection reports, however.

Navy Capt. N. H. Collisson, coal mines administrator, called on Lewis to submit the names of any other mines "which the union considers so hazardous as to require closing."

Collisson said the three steps now provided for removing men from unsafe mines proved inadequate March 25 in the Centralia disaster in which 111 miners lost their lives.

These steps provide that (1) the local union safety committee may require the withdrawal of miners from unsafe mine areas; (2) if imminent danger exists, the federal inspector may require withdrawal of the miners; and (3) the federal inspector reports serious danger by telephone so the coal mines administrator can move immediately to withdraw the miners.

Krug directed Collisson and Dr. R. R. Sayers, director of the Bureau of Mines, "to proceed with the utmost speed to check safety conditions in the mines where the mine safety committee and the management can not agree and permit prompt reopening of those mines under safe working conditions."

To reopen the 518 mines considered hazardous, a safety certificate will be required from the union safety committee and the mine's manager, Krug said. If agreement cannot be reached on the safety certificate, a federal inspector will be sent as soon as possible to go through the mine again and recommend when it can be opened.

The 518 mines which will remain closed are scattered throughout the nation.

Charges Krug 'Pleaded Guilty.'

At Centralia, Hugh White, president of District 12 of the United Mine Workers, charged that Krug, by his order, admitted negligence in operation of the mines.

"Through his action Krug has just pleaded guilty to the charges of negligence made by John L. Lewis," White said.

Adolph Pacifico, vice president of District 6, United Mine Workers, said he believed every coal mine in Ohio would be affected by Krug's order closing 518 unsafe mines.

In a speech at Powhatan Point, O., to miners, their wives and children, Pacifico said he had examined federal inspection reports listing recommendations for increasing safety and that operators had not complied with these suggestions.

"I think every mine in the state of Ohio and the northern panhandle of West Virginia will be affected," he said.

"Safety Strike" Feared.

Krug's action was taken as industry was reported to be growing apprehensive that the mine memorial holiday might grow into a "safety strike."

UMW officers denied there was any talk of a nation-wide "safety strike;" but Ed Morgan, president of UMW District 23 at Madisonville, Ky., said his men "will enforce the contract between Krug and Lewis" by not working in any unsafe operations after the memorial period.

E. L. Reed, secretary-treasurer of District 19, Middleboro, Ky., also warned his men not to enter unsafe pits.

The Department of Interior said few of the 518 mines to be closed are owned by steel companies. However, many of those affected supply steel furnaces, and the department declined to estimate the impact of the shutdown in the steel industry.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics declined to take a stand today on whether the closing of the 518 mines resulted from a labor dispute.

The position the bureau takes may become important in determining whether the 40,000 miners are entitled to unemployment compensation while the mines are shut down.

Krug said the pits are deemed unsafe. Since the Government is operating the mines through Krug, and the Supreme Court has decided that the miners are employes of the Federal Government for certain practical purposes, the miners' jobs are in effect being suspended.

Payment of jobless benefits is determined by each state, but most of them withhold compensation when the workers are made idle by a strike.

Department of Interior officials expressed the opinion that the miners would be entitled to the benefits.

Court Hearing Delayed.

While today originally was the deadline set for Lewis to appear before United States District Judge T. Alan Goldsborough to show his compliance with the Supreme Court decision upholding his contempt conviction, a one-week delay was agreed to by Government and union attorneys and the court.

Lewis's appearance is due to net the UMW a $2,800,000 refund on the $3,500,000 fine which Judge Goldsborough assessed as a result of last fall's strike but which the Supreme Court held to be excessive.

However, should the miners fail to return to work on the expiration of the formal mourning period next Monday, that circumstance conceivably could figure in the jurist's decision on remitting the fine.

Miners' Stoppage Reported Cutting Steel Output.

PITTSBURGH, Pa., April 3 (AP)—Spokesmen for Pittsburgh district steel firms said today that the miners' stoppage already is affecting steel production and that the steel industry will be required to make hasty preparations for curtailment should the stoppage extend beyond a week.

The United States Steel Corp., which gets 20 per cent of its coke from UMW-manned beehive ovens in the Uniontown (Pa.) district, announced it had cut pig iron production 15 per cent at its Monongahela valley mills.

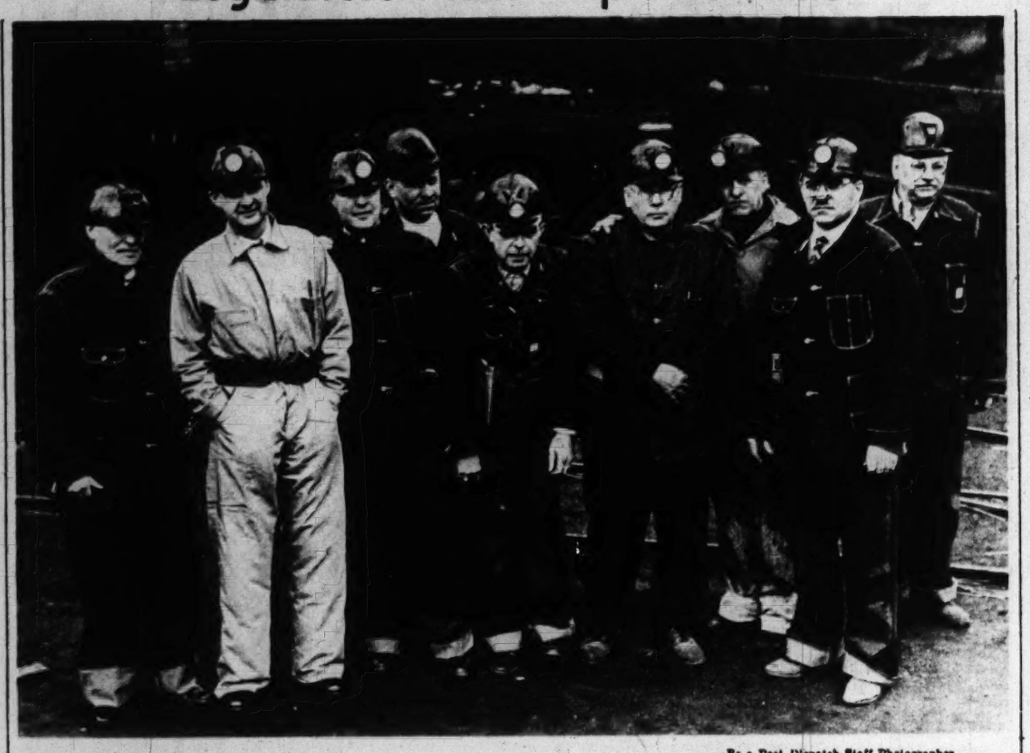
The Sharon Steel Corp. reported it banked one of its two blast furnaces at Farrell, Pa., because of a coke shortage.

Generally, the steel industry is in about the same position it was a year ago when the United Mine Workers began its strike. At that time, coal stocks at the mills were fairly normal; in some instances excellent.

In some cases, however, conditions have changed. A year ago the Jones & Laughlin Steel Corp. had a massive stockpile along the banks of the Ohio river. Because of this, the firm was able to continue operating at 100 per cent through the 50-day walkout in 1946, while other companies cut operations down to as low as 15 per cent of normal.

This year J. & L.'s stockpile is low, and executives said it can only be made to last by means of a production cutback should a danger sign appear.

Legislators Make Trip Into Mine



—By a Post-Dispatch Staff Photographer.

Members of a joint investigating committee of the Illinois Legislature who yesterday made an inspection trip into the Centralia Coal Co. Mine No. 5, preliminary to opening hearings this week on the disastrous mine explosion. From left: REPRESENTATIVE WILL P. WELKER, SENATOR JOHN W. FRIBLEY, SENATOR NORMAN BARRY, REPRESENTATIVE PAUL POWELL, REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAM ROBISON, REPRESENTATIVE ROBERT H. ALLISON, REPRESENTATIVE LLOYD HARRIS (a visitor, who is not a committee member), SENATOR ORA OLDFIELD and SENATOR D. LOGAN GIFFIN. Members not present when photo was made are Senator Merritt J. Little and Representative Carl Preihs.

BELL & ZOLLER HEAD SAYS CLAIMS WILL BE PAID OFF

Feels Personal Responsibility, He Tells Reporter — $250,000 Policy With Lloyd's.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 5

By a Special Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

PASADENA, Calif., April 5—Herbert E. Bell, founder and chief figure in the Bell & Zoller group of coal companies, said today he felt a personal responsibility for payment of claims growing out of the disaster which cost lives of 111 miners of Centralia Coal Co. This company, operating Mine No. 5 at Centralia, Ill., is one of three separate corporations in the Bell & Zoller group.

Bell told the Post-Dispatch that payment of the claims may take all of the assets of the Centralia company, as well as all of its $250,000 liability insurance policy, and that, if this was not enough, he felt he should make up the difference personally. He has no idea yet what the claims of the miners' families may total. Only the corporation which ran the mine, Centralia Coal Co., can be held legally liable, he maintained.

He owns only one share of stock in Centralia Coal Co. but owns the majority of the stock of the two allied concerns, he related. These are Bell & Zoller Coal Mining Co., which operates two other mines in Franklin county, Ill., and Bell & Zoller Coal Co., a sales unit. He is board chairman of all three corporations.

Speaks of Moral Claim.

"There is only a moral claim against the two Bell & Zoller companies," said Bell. "However, I think I'd be inclined to make up individually any difference between the amounts due and what is available to pay them. Even if funds should be shy, claims are all going to be paid to those families. There isn't any doubt of the ability to pay damages. If they can't be paid out of the assets and insurance, some other way will be found. We won't know what they amount to for some time."

Bell, 80 years old and inactive in the management of the group of businesses he established, made it plain he was referring only to legitimately proven claims. He is residing in Pasadena.

Centralia Coal Co., he said, carries a $250,000 liability policy of Lloyd's of London, obtained through a New York agency, to protect it against damage claims.

"It will take that policy and all the assets of the company to pay the claims, I don't doubt," he remarked.

Has No Idea What Assets Are.

However, he said he had no idea what the assets of Centralia Coal Co. might be now, and that he was sure other officers of this concern at Centralia and Chicago could not say, in view of the situation caused by the disaster last week. He added that he had no record available of what the assets had been previously, as he had preferred not to keep up such files after coming to Pasadena.

None of the three corporations issues even typewritten reports to stockholders, as only the officers active in the management receive this information, he declared. While those associated with him in ownership of the two Bell & Zoller concerns also are interested in Centralia Coal Co., there is no individual holding majority or working control of the latter corporation, said Bell. None of the three corporations holds stock in either of the others, he added.

Stock of the three companies is closely owned and has never been listed on any exchange or traded in among brokers, he pointed out, and the companies have not been required to make reports of their business to any public agencies. He asserted his inability to recall what profits of any of the concerns had been, as "some years the coal business is profitable, some it isn't."

Centralia Coal Co. is confronted with the expense of the rescue work after the disaster and of cleaning up the mine, Bell recalled, suggesting that this possibly might cost $50,000.

Homer F. McDonald, president of the Centralia Coal Co., is active director of the Bell & Zoller interests. McDonald, whose offices are in Chicago, has admitted to the Post-Dispatch that he concentrated on the sales end of the business and left operations entirely to W. P. Young.

As federal agent for the mine, McDonald said, he received reports of unsafe conditions at the Centralia mine found by federal inspectors, but turned them over to Young without following them up. McDonald was in St. Louis prior to 1930. He was elected president of the Bell & Zoller Coal Co. in August 1945.

GROUP OF ILLINOIS LEGISLATORS VISIT EXPLOSION SCENE

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 5

By EVARTS GRAHAM JR.
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 5—Members of a 10-man joint investigating committee of the Illinois Legislature today went down into Mine No. 5 of the Centralia Coal Co., where 111 men were killed in an explosion last week.

The committee, which arrived in Centralia yesterday, will hold public hearings next week. The exact day the hearings will start has not been determined.

Senator Merritt J. Little (Rep.), Aurora, named chairman of the group yesterday, said the committee "wanted to get the lay of the land" before it began to question witnesses.

"We don't want to harass a lot of people unnecessarily," he told reporters. "We hope to study transcripts of testimony already taken at hearings conducted by the United States Senate subcommittee and Gov. Green's fact-finding committee."

The committee of the Legislature attended afternoon and evening sessions of the Senate group yesterday in order to obtain background for their investigation.

A joint resolution passed by the Illinois Legislature last Tuesday instructed the committee to "investigate the adequacy of the present mining laws of the State of Illinois, the effectiveness of the provisions for the enforcement thereof; and whether any insufficiency in the mine provisions of said laws or any laxity in their enforcement contributed to the cause of the mine disaster."

The committee was ordered to report its findings not later than May 15. Representative Robert H. Allison (Rep.), Pekin, was elected secretary yesterday.

Other members are: Senators—Ora A. Oldfield, Centralia, and D. Logan Giffin, Springfield, Republicans, and Norman Barry, Chicago, and John W. Fribley, Pana, Democrats. Representatives—William Robison, Carlinville, and Will P. Welker, Vandalia, Republicans, and Paul Powell, Vienna, and Carl Preihs, Pana, Democrats.

TWO OF SCANLAN'S WARNINGS STILL UP AT CENTRALIA PIT

Last Report Six Days Before Blast in Which 111 Died Demanded End of Hazards.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 2

By a Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 2—Mine Inspector Driscoll Scanlan's two warning reports to the Centralia Coal Co. on the dangerous condition of its Mine No. 5, and his unheeded demand for safety measures, still are posted on the bulletin board of the mine. They have had a tragic interest since the death of 111 miners in the explosion in the mine eight days ago.

The later of Scanlan's reports, dated March 18 and 19, 1947, was written barely six days before the disaster. It was comparatively brief, and called attention to the previous warning, repeating the previous demand that remedial measures be taken.

Text of the later notice is:

"March 18 and 19, 1947.

"I have this day inspected Mine No. 5 of the Centralia Coal Co., and I find its condition as follows:

"Ventilation inadequate at the working faces at head of 1 and 2 west, at last cross out 20 and 21 north, 4th. west and the deep rooms off 24 south.

"Condition of haulage roads and refuge places: The wall supporting the hoist in the underground machine shop is broken and hazardous to repair men using the hoist.

"The mine is not adequately rock dusted.

"Recommendations:

"That the ventilation be increased at the above place reported as inadequate.

"That the dirty haulage roads be cleaned and sprinkled. The loose roof on the haulage roads be taken down or securely timbered, the high place on the 1st. west at 5th. north be cross-timbered immediately. The hoist in the underground machine shop be put in safe condition. The mine be adequately rock dusted.

"Recommendations of previous inspections that have not been complied with should be complied with."

Text of Earlier Reports.

The earlier and more detailed report and call for remedial action is:

"Dec. 13 and 14, 1945.

"Ventilation inadequate at the face of the last few rooms 22 north and at the head of 22 north, there were two open cross-cuts and two cross-cuts closed with curtains that were leaking considerable air between 20 and 21 north. No reading at last cross-cut 21 and 22 south, four cross-cuts were closed with curtains in poor condition and short-circuiting the air from the head of the entries.

"Motor roads are dirty. The buggy roadways are extremely dry and dusty. Not enough refuge places along the motor roads.

"Loose and dangerous roof on the haulage roads in every section of the mine. Trolley wire is not guarded at low places and junctures.

"Insufficient lights at shaft landing to show landing and cages distinctly. The mine is not equipped with sufficient telephones and the telephones are too far from the working sections. Generator in by 18 north has not been fireproofed and still presents a fire hazard.

"Recommendations:

"That the cross-cuts between 20 and 21 north, except one nearest face, be closed with substantial stoppings and the check curtains across the middle entry moved up to the last cross-cut. The cross-cuts between 21 and 22 south, except one nearest face be closed with substantial stoppage to conduct the air to the head of the entries.

"That the motor and buggy roads be cleaned and sprinkled.

"Sufficient refuge places made along the motor roads.

"The loose roof of the haulage roads taken down or securely timbered.

"The trolley wire guarded at low places and junctions.

"That sufficient lights be installed at the shaft landing to distinctly show the landings and cages.

"That a telephone be installed in every working section of the mine.

"That the generator room in by 18 north be completely fireproofed."

Inadequate Ventilation.

"Ventilation inadequate at a number of deep rooms, some rooms are driven to a depth of 400 to 600 feet without any doors or stoppings being built to conduct the air to the faces.

"Several rooms have been worked of the last entry of the cross-cut.

"There are now more than 100 men working on the one split of air.

"Long trips of cars are still being pushed a long distance without a light on the front of the trips. The buggies have not been provided with nips that will give an electrical tight connection.

There are a number of loose boulders (nigger heads) over the haulage roads in 18 and 19 north.

"A number of working places were not adequately timbered. A number of places were observed with loose and dangerous roof and had been reported as safe by the mine examiner. With all the loose and dangerous roof in this mine I have never noticed a keep-out sign placed by the examiner.

"Recommendations:

"That the necessary doors be built and room cross-cuts closed to conduct the air to the face of the deep rooms.

"The practice of working rooms ahead of the last entry cross-cut be discontinued.

"The ventilating current split so there will be less than 100 men on each split.

"The pushing of trips be discontinued and the trips pulled instead. Lights carried on the front of all trips.

"The buggies equipped with nips that will give a positive electrical tight connection.

"The loose boulders over the haulage roads in 18 and 19 north and also in the other sections of the mine be supported by cross bars.

"That every necessary precaution be taken with bad roof. Places in which the examiner discovers loose and dangerous roof be marked out by him and reported to the mine manager. That the mine manager withhold the entrance checks of the men who are to work in the places until he has taken every proper precaution to advise the men and face bosses of the danger and instructed them not to work in such places until the danger has been removed, except for the purpose of removing same.

"The coal in this mine is extremely dry, an excessive amount of dust is in suspension during cutting and loading operations. The dust is an explosion hazard, also injurious to the health and safety of the men working around the machines. The dust is very injurious and irritating to the eyes and respiratory passages. At the loading machine in 13 and 14 north, visibility was absolutely nil, the men are unable to see the roof, ribs, face, the large lumps of coal traveling over the conveyor to the car under the boom, motormen and trip riders are unable to see the boom of the loading machine, etc.

"The two mine examiners for the night shift are still wearing open lights.

"The mine is not adequately rock dusted. Cross bars have not been provided on each section to be available for the use of supporting bad top.

"Recommendations:

"That water or wetting solutions be used on the cutter bars of the cutting machines, on the loading heads of the loading machines and on the falls of coal to allay and minimize the coal dust for the safety and health of the miners. The air conducted to the faces by erecting doors, stoppings and line brattices.

"All examiners be provided with permissible electric cap lamps.

"The mine be adequately rock dusted.

"That a supply of cross bars be provided on each section to be available to the timbermen and face bosses when needed."

KENTUCKY UMW CITES EXPLOSION HAZARDS IN STATE

Charges Control by Coal Men, Says If Safety Were Enforced There Wouldn't Be Any Work.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 5

By GEORGE H. HALL
A Washington Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

WASHINGTON, April 5 — A charge that the Kentucky State Department of Mines and Minerals "is owned and controlled by the coal operators of the State" is made in a telegram received by John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers, from officers of UMW District 30 at Lexington, Ky.

Lewis referred to the charge at the time he designated the present period of mourning for the 111 men killed March 25 in the explosion at the Centralia (Ill.) Coal Company's No. 5 mine. The telegram from Kentucky was produced by Lewis Thursday at a United States Senate labor and education subcommittee hearing at Washington.

Lewis said that enforcement of mine safety regulations by the states never had been effective because state inspection systems were shot through with politics. He used the alleged situation in Kentucky as an example.

The Post-Dispatch has disclosed how Illinois state mine inspectors were ordered to solicit funds from operators for political purposes, and how the Centralia mine was permitted to continue operating despite the pleas of Driscoll Scanlan, an inspector who refused to fall in with the scheme, that it be shut down.

Lewis places primary blame for the disaster on Secretary of the Interior J. A. Krug, technical operator of the bituminous mines for the government under the Krug-Lewis agreement of last May 29.

The Telegram to Lewis.

The Kentucky telegram to Lewis follows:

"Krug and his coal mines administration failed to carry out the mining code (federal mine safety code) as per agreement. If every mine in Kentucky shut down for failure to admister the mining code, there would not be any work.

"The State Department of Mines and Minerals is owned and controlled by the coal operators of the state. The miners cannot even get in the doorway. Last year less than 720 inspections were made and the state law requires 8000 inspections for the 2000 mines.

"Rock dusting (a means of minimizing explosion hazards) is a part of the state law and the federal mine safety code and a basic safety requirement. It is almost totally ignored.

"Many miners are working now where federal examinations show in testing the air at the last breakthrough they are unable to register the current of air with an anemometer. We have the record over the signature of federal mine inspectors to prove that the administration of the safety code was not made effective despite the fact it was known by Krug's department. No boss or manager or superintendent or owner has ever been removed for failure to comply in district 30."

The message was signed by Sam Caddy, president; James J. McAndrew, secretary-treasurer, and Tom Raney, member of the UMW international board.

Collisson's Authority.

Under the Krug-Lewis agreement the coal mines administrator for the Interior Department, in this case Capt. N. H. Collisson, has authority to discipline or replace an operating manager whose mine does not comply with safety recommendations of the federal inspectors.

The agreement also provides machinery for the miners themselves to close a mine they believe to be in a dangerous condition. It provides that the local union at each mine is to elect a safety committee, which may make inspections to determine if the mine is in compliance with the code.

If the committee thinks the conditions endanger the lives or bodies of the miners, it can recommend to the mine operator that all workers be removed from the unsafe area and this recommendation must be complied with unless the committee is overruled by the coal mines administrator.

$35,000 IN FUND FOR DEPENDENTS OF MINE VICTIMS

Wayfarer Befriended by Centralia Constable in 1929 Sends $2.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 4

By a Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 4—The fund being raised for the dependents of the 111 miners killed in the explosion of March 25 was at the $35,000 mark today.

Mayor O. W. Wright, in charge of the fund raising, received a letter from a Chicago man who took the occasion to show his gratitude for what he considered kind treatment given him in the town when he was a wayfarer. The man wrote:

"Honorable Mayor,

"I cannot offer very much to help . . . but here's $2 and with other small donations it will at least help some family who has been left destitute.

"I am merely paying a debt of gratitude which I received in 1929 when your town constable allowed me to sleep in his jail and I was given a piece of bread and a cup of coffee in the morning. I always try to remember these overtures of kindness."

Contributions from St. Louis sources, few in number thus far, amount to $13,016. The items are: Anheuser-Busch, Inc., $5000; Griesedieck Bros. Brewery Co., $3000; Falstaff Brewing Corp., $2500; Hyde Park Brewing Co., $2500; William J. Jackson, Normandy $10; Money Mart, $4, and Maplewood Mission, $2.

PMW TO RETURN TO COAL PITS IN ILLINOIS TOMORROW

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 1

Mines worked by members of the independent Progressive Mine Workers of America, rival of John L. Lewis's United Mine Workers, concluded a two-day holiday today with observance of Mitchell day, the annual miners' tribute to attainment of the eight-hour day in 1898.

Yesterday, all 26 Progressive-worked mines in St. Clair county were shut down as miners mourned the victims of the Centralia disaster. They were joined by the Okay Mine at Marissa, operated by UMW men. The Progressive mines will reopen tomorrow.

Delegations from each PMWA local attended funeral services at Centralia. Locals announced they were raising funds for relatives of the victims. Operators and miners at the Belle Valley Mine, Belleville, collected $500.

Mine operators, superintendents and safety directors in Illinois District 8, covering St. Clair and Madison counties, will hold a series of roundtable discussions of safety regulations, Fred Lippert, district state mine inspector, announced yesterday after a meeting at Belleville with mine superintendents.

DATA SHOWS HOW MINE 'BRUSHED OFF' COMPLAINTS

Firm Never Notified State Office It Had Complied With Inspector's Requests.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 5

By SPENCER R. McCULLOCH
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 5—The manner in which the State Department of Mines and Minerals permitted the Centralia Coal Co. to shrug off repeated official complaints about operating hazards at its ill-fated mine here was disclosed in records obtained today by the Post-Dispatch.

In spection reports dating from Dec. 13, 1945 to last March 19, a week before the disastrous explosion in which 111 miners were killed, show that State Mine Inspector Driscoll Scanlan time after time pointed out to his superiors that the mine management was violating state mining laws.

His recommendations were forwarded to the company, with a request for compliance. That appeared to be the extent of the enforcement of Scanlan's recommendations. The company never informed the state that it had complied with any of them and it seldom responded to the communications from the Department of Mines and Minerals.

Example of "Brush Off."

A typical example of the company's substitution of "the brush off" for compliance with an urgent safety recommendations took place early in 1945. On Feb. 21, Scanlan reported directly to Robert M. Medill, who recently resigned under fire as director of the Department of Mines and Minerals, that haulage roads in the mine were in "terrible condition" and that the miners were rebelling.

"If a person did not see it he would not believe that any one would let a mine get in such condition," Scanlan wrote Medill. "In places, you cannot see the rails and the motors are dragging; one swing motor went by me and at times his lights would go out for the want of a return circuit and it would jump like a rabbit."

Scanlan stated that two months previously when he inspected the mine he dissuaded officers of the United Mine Workers local, composed of men who work in the mine, from informing the mine manager they would seek to have his license revoked unless he cleaned up the mine.

"I talked them out of it and told them I thought we could get them to clean up the mine," Scanlan wrote Medill, "but on this inspection I find that practically nothing has been done toward complying with my recommendations of Dec. 19th and 20th."

Suggested Closing Mine.

Scanlan advised Medill that the mine superintendent had informed him that he could not clean up the mine and hoist coal six days a week. Scanlan proposed to Medill that the mine should halt production for a while and put the men to work cleaning roads, rock-dusting, and performing other labors to place the mine in a safe condition.

"The coal dust in this mine is highly explosive," Scanlan reported, "and they have had one dust explosion in which several men were killed."

Scanlan advised Medill that several miners had requested copies of the state mining laws and added that if something were not done soon they would probably bring charges against him (Scanlan) as well as the mine manager and superintendent.

"If the company will clean this mine up," Scanlan concluded, "and see that their face bosses turn and drive cross-cuts every 60 feet to adequately ventilate the working faces, they will correct a lot of their absenteeism, will build up the morale of their men and increase their tonnage."

Medill Letter to Young.

Six days later Medill wrote William P. Young, operating head of the mine at his Chicago office, addressing him as "Dear Bill," enclosing a copy of Scanlan's letter and report and requesting their return with "any comments you wish to make."

Young replied to Medill the next day, addressing him as "Dear Bob," without, however, agreeing to do anything about the safety recommendations.

"As you know, we have been working under a very severe handicap for the past months," Young stated, "the war demand for coal has required that we operate every possible day and at the same time we are short of men practically every day. This is particularly true at Centralia where the average age of our employes is quite high.

"I am hopeful that the urgent demand for coal will ease up in another month so that we may have available both the time and labor to give proper attention to the recommendations of Inspector Scanlan."

"Ask Union to Be Patient."

Medill waited a week and then wrote Scanlan, on March 7, in answer to his letter of Feb. 21, suggesting that he ask the union mine committee to "be patient."

Medill wrote as follows:—

"Dear Mr. Scanlan:

"In reply to your letter of Feb. 21, with inspection report attached, I am inclosing a copy of a letter I wrote to Mr. William P. Young, vice president of the Centralia Coal Co., and a copy of his reply.

"I also talked with Mr. Young on the 'phone, and I feel quite sure that he is ready and willing to do the things incorporated in your report as soon as time will permit.

"I would suggest that you ask the Mine Committee to be patient a little longer, inasmuch as the coal is badly needed at this time."

Most of Scanlan's recommendations were usually forwarded to the coal company by Robert Weir, assistant director of the department. On each occasion the report would be accompanied by a letter from Weir stating "the department indorses the recommendations made by Inspector Scanlan and requests that you comply with same. Will you please advise the department upon the completion of the recommendations, set forth above?"

The company responded to only one of Weir's communications. That was on last Jan. 25 when H. C. Niermann, acting superintendent of the Centralia mine, wrote Weir stating that Scanlan's recommendations on drilling certain blasting holes would be followed.

In his long series of reports Scanlan warned frequently that dust was an explosion hazard in the mine and that the company was violating the state law through inadequate ventilation. There was an insufficient number of underground telephones in the mine, he warned, necessitating in some instances a walk of a mile to reach one.

On one occasion, Scanlan reported, he found members of a blasting crew tamping explosives with coal dust instead of with non-combustible clay.

Scanlan appealed again to Medill on May 23, 1946, informing him that the mine refused to co-operate and that he could obtain "no promise or assurance" that safety recommendations would be carried out. The series of inspection reports, which were apparently disregarded, continued until the time of the disaster.

'Bob' to 'Bill' on Mine Safety

Photostatic copies of the text of letters written by Driscoll Scanlan, Robert M. Medill and William P. Young That Show What Happened to One Complaint About Conditions in Centralia Coal Co. Mine No. 5.

Driscoll O. Scanlan

Nashville, Illinois 19th
February 21, 1945

Mr. Robert M. Medill, Director
Dept. of Mines & Minerals,
Springfield, Illinois.

Dear Mr. Medill:

Attached is my inspection report on the No. Five mine of the Centralia Coal Company. The haulage roads in this mine are in a terrible condition. If a person did not see it he would not belief that any one would let a mine get in such condition. In places you can not see the rails and the motors are dragging, one swing moter went by me and at times his lights would go out for the want of a return circuit and it would jump like a rabbit.

Two months ago when I inspected this mine, the Local Officers told me that they had been instructed by a motion of the Local Union meeting to inform the Mine Manager that if he did not clean the mine up they were going to prefer charges against him before the Mining Board and have his Certificate canceled. I talked them out of it and told them I thought we could get them to clean up the mine. But on this inspection I find that practically nothing has been done toward complying with my recommendations of Dec. 19th & 20th.

Mr. Prudent the Supt. advises me that he can not clean up the mine and hoist coal six days a week. The mine should discontinue hoisting coal for awhile and work their men at cleaning roads, taking down loose top, timbering, rock dusting, etc. until the mine is placed in a safe condition. They now have a road-cleaning head built for a Joy and it would not take so long to clean the roads. The coal dust in this mine is highly explosive and they have had one dust explosion in which several men were killed.

Several of the Miners asked me for copies of the Mining Law, if something is not done soon they will probablely bring charges against me as well as the Mine Manager and Supt.

If the Company will clean this mine up and see that their face bosses turn and drive cross-cuts every sixty feet to adequately ventilate the working faces, they will correct a lot of their absenteeism, will built up the moral of their men and increase their tonnage.

Respectfully yours,

Driscoll O. Scanlan

State Mine Inspector.

February 27, 1945

Mr. William Young
Bell & Zoller Coal Company
307 North Michigan Avenue
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Bill:

I am inclosing herewith letter and report from Driscoll O. Scanlan, State Mine Inspector. Please let me have any comments you wish to make in connection with the matter, with the return of the inclosed.

Very kindest personal regards.

Sincerely yours,

(s) Robert M. Medill

Director.

RMM-ER

C O P Y

CENTRALIA COAL COMPANY
307 N. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, Illinois

February 28, 1945

Mr. Robert M. Medill, Director
Department of Mines & Minerals
Springfield, Illinois

Dear Bob:

I am returning herewith the letter and report on Centralia Coal Company Mine by State Mine Inspector, Driscoll O. Scanlan.

As you know, we have been working under a very severe handicap for the past months. The war demand for coal has required that we operate every possible day and at the same time we are short of men practically every day. This is particularly true at Centralia where the average age of our employees is quite high.

I am hopeful that the urgent demand for coal will ease up in another month so that we may have available both the time and labor to give proper attention to the recommendations of Inspector Scanlan.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Yours very truly,

(s) Wm. P. Young
Vice President

TRUMAN BACKS KRUG, WILL NOT OUST OFFICIAL

No Comment on Lewis Criticism—UMW Chief Asks Congress to Act to Oust Secretary.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 3

WASHINGTON, April 3 (AP)—Secretary of Interior J. A. Krug today won the unqualified support of President Truman in his controversy with John L. Lewis over coal mine operators.

Truman told his press conference flatly that Krug is an able public official and that he has no intention of removing him. Truman would not comment directly on Lewis's criticism of Krug. He said that Krug would answer these charges himself.

By GEORGE H. HALL
A Washington Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

WASHINGTON, April 3—While motion picture cameras ground and radio microphones quivered, John L. Lewis repeated today that criminal negligence of Secretary of the Interior J. A. Krug was responsible for the death of 111 men in the Centralia (Ill.) mine explosion March 25.

The bulldoggish chief of the AFL United Mine Workers, blinking and basking in the glare of klieg lights, referred to Krug as "that modern Hercules with number 12 shoes and a number 5 hat," who spent his time resting while mine safety violations went unchecked.

He made three suggestions:

1. That Congress enact a joint resolution asking the President to remove Krug from office.

2. That Congress enact at once legislation making it mandatory for a federal mine inspector to close down a mine for violations of the federal mine safety code.

3. That Congress authorize the refunding of the fine assessed against Lewis and the mine workers for contempt of court and that this money be placed in a trust fund for dependents of miners killed in the Centralia explosion and in a mine disaster in Kentucky two years ago. He estimated this sum, including charges for impounding, would be close to $750,000.

He carefully avoided specific mention of the political scandal exposed by the Post-Dispatch in Illinois, where it was shown state mine inspectors were ordered to put the lug on operators for contributions to Republican campaign funds. Lewis had ample opportunity to absorb the facts gathered by this newspaper.

Under questioning, he did acknowledge that fundamentally and basically the responsibility for operating a safe mine lies with the operators. He repeated his assertion that all state enforcement is of little value because of political considerations.

Lewis showed that he was familiar with the report sent yesterday to the Senate committee investigating the Centralia explosion, although the report has not been made public. He discussed successively the major points Krug made in defense of his administration.

He asserted, though the committee members were unable to pin him down, that the UMW mine safety committee at Centralia, which, under the Krug-Lewis pact, had considerable powers to effect a closing of the mine for unsafe conditions, could not act because of Krug's "yellow-dog injunction."

He meant the Government's injunction ending the work stoppage of last fall and said that the miners knew they could recommend closing of a mine only at their own risk.

Questioned by Kersten.

Representative Kersten (Rep.), Wisconsin, no match for the masterful Lewis in give-and-take debate, questioned the union boss along these lines:

Kersten: You don't mean the injunction made the safety clause inoperative?

Lewis: The combination of the injunction and the provisions of the Smith-Connally Act caused our men to understand they could close down the mine only at their own hazard.

Kersten: You had the report of last November in which a federal inspector listed the violations at the Centralia mine?

Lewis: I had all these reports. The Centralia report was just one of them.

Kersten: Did any portion of the injunction prevent you from having the men removed from the mine?

Lewis: Oh, my dear friend, that depends on the view of the United States Department of Justice.

Kersten: Do you believe the injunction prevented you?

Lewis: It has.

Kersten: You believe the injunction did away with the Krug-Lewis contract?

Lewis: I believe what the Supreme Court said. It took them about 50,000 words, and I suggest you read it.

Kersten: Did you believe it?

Lewis: I didn't believe it but the Supreme Court convinced me I was wrong.

Kersten: I understand that Frank Pera, a federal inspector; Driscoll Scanlan, a state inspector, and a member of your own union local committee, who was later killed in the explosion, inspected the mine five or six days before the blast. Don't you think any one of these men could have taken steps to close the mine?

"They Take Chances."

Lewis: You don't understand. Men become inured to hazard. Men who hope they won't be killed come to believe they won't. They take chances, under pressure of their responsibilities at home.

Lewis was adroit in turning a question he thought might have embarrassing connotations. His usual method was to deliver a speech, easing farther and farther away from the point. He has seldom been in better form oratorically. He savored every line, sweeping from slow, deliberate statements to fiery declaratives.

Lewis contended Krug would not have issued his order if the miners had not left the mines for a six-day mourning period.

"This is Krug's deathbed confession and, Oh God, what a grotesque, monstrous mistake he is in the postion he occupies," Lewis roared.

Replying to questions by Representative Nixon (Rep.) California, Lewis said he had recommended that the union's membership end the present stoppage next Monday.

"I hope thy will go back," he added.

Nixon continued: Is it your opinion that they will go back?

Lewis: It's my opinion they will go back in any mine that's safe enough to enter.

Nixon: And you will so recommend?

Lewis: I have already done so, and I here publicly state it.

Representative Kearns (Rep.), Pennsylvania, wanted to know whether Lewis pulled a "grand stand" play with the memorial layoff as a result of resentment against the supreme Court decision in the mine union contempt case.

Lewis sucked in his breath audibly, puffed up and declared slowly and solemnly: "I assure you I had no ulterior motive."

He slapped the witness table with the palm of his hand, shrank back into his chair to speak in soft tones of the tragedies inherent in a miner's life, and reared forward to shout denunciations of Krug.

"I reiterate," he roared, "J. A. Krug was responsible and I will prove it beyond peradventure. I do not say J. A. Krug killed these 111 men by affirmative action. I say J. A. Krug by his inaction has permitted them to die while he withheld from them succor it was in his power to give."

Lewis's peak of rhetoric was reached with this statement, given in a bellow that seemed to shake the crystal chandeliers in the crowded House caucus room: "If we must grind up human flesh and bones in the industrial machine we call America, then before God I assert we owe protection to these men and aid to their widows. I say it, I voice it, I proclaim it, and I care not who in heaven or hell opposes it."

Lewis testified before the welfare subcommittee of the House Labor and Education Committee. Chairman Max Schwabe (Rep.), Missouri, announced at the session that Krug had ordered the closing of 518 bituminous mines until they are safe. ... ...

This drew from Lewis the comment that Krug was "now starting to enforce his own code after 111 men died."

Asked by Nixon to point out the specific instances in which Krug was negligent, Lewis brought a wave of laughter when he replied: "The day is early yet."

Kearns asked how many mines were safe before the Government took them over last May 29.

"Probably not even two," he replied, referring to the number asserted by Krug to have complied entirely with the federal code.

Kearns persisted: "You say the mines were safer under Krug than they were before. How can you charge negligence?"

Lewis stuttered and seemed genuinely taken aback for the first time.

"Because he let them die by failing to enforce his regulations," he replied.

Lewis asserted the report of Krug to the Senate committee was prepared last Sunday by Krug; Capt. N. H. Collisson, Coal Mines Administrator; Warren Gardner, attorney for the Interior Department, and the newspaper columnist, Drew Pearson.

Lewis asserted he would refute Krug's arguments on six points.

He scoffed at Krug's contention that the mine inspectors did not use the term "imminent danger" in their reports of violations in the Centralia mine and hence sufficient danger to close the mine was not apparent. He said the term does not appear in Krug's contract. (The term is in the code drawn up under the Krug-Lewis agreement.)

Local Safety Committee.

As to Krug's assertion that the local Mine Safety Committee made no report of the conditions to the Coal Mines Administrator or agents, he said the committee had authority to report only to management.

To Krug's declaration that the state had full authority, he replied certainly, but the states do not exercise this responsibility because of politics.

"The state inspectors couldn't keep the mines safe because of political interference with the inspections," he said. "That's why we wanted the federal code. Krug promised me he would enforce it."

As to Krug's report that a total of 16,000 deficiencies had been corrected, Lewis said that, according to Bureau of Mines figures, there were still more than 31,000 still to be corrected.

ILLINOIS LEGISLATORS DELAY HEARINGS ON MINE BLAST

Decide to Postpone Inquiry Until Next Week —SixRepublicans on 10-Man Committee.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 4

By EVARTS GRAHAM JR.
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 4—A 10-man Illinois Legislative Committee decided today to postpone until next week hearings here into causes of the March 25 explosion at Centralia Coal Co. Mine No. 5, in which 111 miners lost their lives.

The committee consists of five senators and five representatives. Senators are: Merritt J. Little, Aurora; Ora A. Oldfield, Centralia, and D. Logan Giffin, Springfield, Republicans, and Norman Barry, Chicago, and John W. Fribley, Pana, Democrats. Representatives are Robert H. Allison, Pekin; William Robison, Carlinville, and Will P. Welker, Vandalia, Republicans, and Paul Powell, Vienna, and Carl Preihs, Pana, Democrats.

Before the House concurred at Springfield yesterday in Senate approval of the investigation, Democrats sought unsuccessfully to increase the size of the committee by two. Their intent was to give each party six representatives on the group.

Opposes Delay in Inquiry.

Representative Robert J. Branson, a Centralia Republican, opposed the proposal, contending it would delay the inquiry by requiring further Senate consideration.

He was answered by Powell who is Democratic minority leader. Powell asserted: "You're starting now to whitewash the disaster. I don't know how you can have an impartial investigation with three Republicans and two Democrats from each House."

Two other inquiries were in progress today. Besides an investigation already under way by a subcommittee of the Senate Public Lands Committee, the United States Bureau of Mines has sent inspectors into the honeycomb of passageways in the mine to search for a clue.

Gov. Dwight H. Green's fact-finding committee, meanwhile, is scheduled to meet next Tuesday at 11 a.m. at Springfield in executive session to prepare a written report for submission to the Governor. The committee, which has ended its hearings here, announced its willingness to receive additional testimony at the capital on Tuesday.

The Governor's committee is generally agreed that the blast was propagated by coal dust which was several inches deep on the floors of most of the working rooms and passageways in the mine.

Point of Ignition Sought.

Led by M. J. Ankeny, Mount Hope, W. Va., expert on explosions the Bureau of Mines men are attempting to uncover the source and location of the ignition of the blast. Ankeny and seven other men began their inspection of the mine yesterday, and expect to conclude the underground phase tomorrow.

They do not plan to hold any public hearings. When they have completed their inquiry, a report will be forwarded to Washington, where it will be made public as required by the federal act of 1941 establishing the Bureau of Mines.

The inspectors are examining every working place in the mine, trying to find the places where damage was greatest. They are looking for such evidences of intense heat as "coking" of coal dust.

Hundreds of samples of dust and air are being collected for subsequent laboratory examination. Among the things to be determined in the analysis is the amount of ash in the dust—to indicate exactly where heat was most intense.

Dust Samples Sealed in Cans.

The dust is being scraped from timbers, working faces, floors and roofs and collected in air-tight cans to insure that no moisture can evaporate and that the samples are not mixed with other air or dust after they have been removed from the mine.

Ankeny, who is in charge, has been employed by the Bureau of Mines for the last 18 years with the special responsibility of examining mines where there have been explosions. He went into the Centralia mine for the first time Wednesday for an examination to make sure that it was safe for members of the Governor's committee to enter.

The inspectors who have been working with him have been in the mine frequently since the explosion occurred. They participated in operations to recover the bodies of the trapped men.

Under the contract between the United Mine Workers Union and the Federal Government, a report of a Bureau of Mines investigation of every mine explosion must be made within 10 days after rescue operations have been completed.

Ankeny said that in this case, it would be impossible to complete the report within the specified time, and an interim report will be forwarded to Washington early next week.

Members of the Illinois State Mining Board yesterday inspected the mine. An inspection by the board is required by state laws whenever an explosion occurs.

SAFETY CODE CUT MINE DEATH RATE 10 A MONTH, SAYS KRUG IN LETTER

WASHINGTON, April 3.

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR J. A. KRUG, in a letter to Senator Guy Cordon (Rep.), Oregon, chairman of the Senate Public Lands Committee, recited figures on fatalities in the coal mining industry in the United States.

In the last 46 years, Krug said, there have been 71,030 coal mine fatalities, or an average of more than 128 deaths a month.

Under the safety code, in operation only since last July 29, the death rate has been lowered. Average coal mine fatalities for the six-year period before the Government took over the mines were 95 a month. From last June 1 to the present, including the 111 deaths in the Centralia disaster, the average has been 85 a month.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch

OPERATING HEAD OF MINE ADMITS HE DISREGARDED SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

YOUNG ACCEPTS RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONDITIONS IN CENTRALIA PIT

Vice President in Charge Tells Senators That He Is Not Passing the Buck—Illinois Phase of Hearing Ends.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 5

By SELWYN PEPPER
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 5—William P. Young, operating head of the Centralia Coal Co. Mine No. 5, where 111 miners lost their lives, today accepted full responsibility for conditions in the mine and admitted he deliberately had disregarded safety recommendations of United States Bureau of Mines inspectors.

Young was the final witness to appear today before the United States Senate subcommittee investigating the disaster. Subcommittee members, after concluding hearings in Centralia, left for Washington, where the investigation will be continued and more witnesses, including Secretary of the Interior Krug and John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers of America, will be heard.

Senator Henry Dworshak (Rep.), Idaho, pressed Young to assume responsibility for conditions in the mine. "Who was responsible for safety corrections in the Centralia Mine No. 5?" the Senator asked.

"That's a legal question," Young replied. "I am not qualified to answer it."

"If you can't give us a legal answer," Dworshak persisted, "give us a realistic answer."

"I Have the Responsibility."

"I have the responsibility," said Young, "which I have assumed."

"Everybody has been passing the buck . . . " Dworshak continued.

"I'm not passing the buck," Young replied.

Later, Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney (Dem.), Wyoming, questioned Young concerning his compliance with federal safety inspectors' recommendations. Federal inspectors had found more than 50 violations of the mine safety code at the mine less than a week before the fatal explosion.

"Did you, as operating vice president, ever believe it was possible to disregard in part the recommendations of the inspectors and still continue to operate the mines?" Senator O'Mahoney asked.

"Yes," replied Young. "I thought that would be possible."

Young, at one point in his testimony, pointed out that Homer F. McDonald, president of the Centralia Coal Co., was only the nominal head of the firm and that he, Young, was the operating manager. Young is vice president of the Centralia firm, but president of the $1,000,000 Bell & Zoller Mining Corp., controlling operating company. McDonald, however, was named federal agent in charge of the mine, under terms of Government seizure by the Federal Coal Mines Administrator.

Summarizing Young's testimony, Senator O'Mahoney declared:

"You felt Federal Mine Inspector Frank Perz's reports should be complied with to a certain extent. You undertook to see that the mine general superintendent, Walter J. Johnson, was instructed to comply. You notified McDonald that this was being done. You ordered pipe for a sprinkling system, but you had not taken any step regarding rock-dusting or the installation of electric lamps on miners' caps . . . "

"About the electric lamps," said Young, "we did not take any steps. About the rock-dusting—I felt sufficient dusting had been done already."

Young said he had not complied with some of the Federal inspector's recommendations because "some were major and some were minor, depending on the inspector's feelings. I didn't intend to disregard any major recommendations—**because** the inspector wouldn't let us."

Matter of Time.

Young testified that the lack of compliance with inspection recommendations "was more a matter of time than of expense." He said many safety measures had been started, but not completed.

He agreed with Senator Guy Cordon (Rep.), Oregon, subcommittee chairman, that excessive amounts of coal dust in the mine "constituted a hazard," and also that "adequate rock-dusting could have allayed the dust. . . . At times we thought the mine was adequately rock-dusted, but in six or seven months the effect would wear off."

To determine the need for rock-dusting, Young said he "went down in the mine two or three times a year."

He said he saw federal inspectors' reports, which had described the dusty condition of the mine, but "not the state reports. They weren't sent to me." Young's office is in Chicago.

"What had you done about the federal reports?" he was asked.

"Well," Young said, "we had ordered the pipe for the sprinkler system. I don't know when it will be delivered."

Calls Condition Common.

The witness said dusty mines were common in Illinois. "I don't offer this as an excuse," he said, "but I don't know of any mine in which working rooms are rock-dusted. Conditions here are no worse than in other mines.

"We've had a terrible disaster. It could have happened anywhere."

Senator Cordon pointed out that the federal mine safety code requires rock-dusting inside working rooms, to within 80 feet of the working faces. "Since this was not the general practice, you felt you were entitled to disregard it, is that right?" he asked.

"As far as I know," Young said, "gas and shooting (blasting) were the only two things to be considered with regard to explosions As for gas, this was not a gassy mine. As for shooting—we were using a 'permissible explosive.'

"Since the disaster, we might as well throw 'permissible explosives' out the window."

Attitude on Dust.

Although he previously had said he considered dust a hazard, Young, in response to a question by Senator O'Mahoney, said, "It's my honest conviction that the recommendation of the inspectors regarding coal dust was only for the convenience of the men." Both state and federal mine inspectors had recommended that dust be cleared off the mine roads. Senator Cordon turned quickly toward the witness.

"Mr. Young," he said, "if you dont' agree that all these recommended precautions are necessary, simply say so."

Young said nothing, but nodded his head in apparent agreement.

The mine head said he disagreed with an opinion, offered earlier by State Mine Inspector Driscoll Scanlan, that the fatal explosion of dust in the mine had been detonated by a faulty blasting charge, overloaded with explosive powder, and possibly tamped with coal dust instead of clay.

Says Shooting Was Normal.

"It is my information," Young said, "that the explosion was not caused by a 'windy shot.' I don't know what Scanlan means. The shooting in the mine was all normal."

Young said the management had disregarded the recommendation that electric safety lamps be used on miners' caps, because they thought the union would object. He admitted, however, that the question had never been discussed with any union representative.

As for electric detonators for blasting charges—also recommended by inspectors, to replace fuses—Young said they would do no good so long as open-flame cap lamps were used.

Senator O'Mahoney asked if miners who had testified before the subcommittee would be penalized by the management. Young said they would not.

"All the miners I heard," Young said, "gave honest testimony."

Payments to Dependents.

At the conclusion of Young's testimony, O'Mahoney introduced excerpts from the Illinois Workmen's Compensation Law and pointed out that any payments to dependents under this code came, not from the state, but from funds of the mine operators. The operators may provide these funds through surety bonds or insurance.

"I am informed by Harrison Combs (general counsel of the United Mine Workers at Washington)," said O'Mahoney, "that the payment for a death victim without dependents is $150. Payments to dependents of victims are determined by a statutory formula depending on the number of dependents."

It has been pointed out heretofore that the range of such payments is $4000 to $6000.

Chairman Cordon was asked by a reporter after the session if he considered the Illinois compensation provisions adequate. He replied: "I leave it to Illinois to determine the amount of compensation, but I would increase it."

Senator Cordon thanked everyone who had participated in the hearings, just before adjourning the session. He said the next session, in Washington, would be held "within two weeks."

Subcommittee members left by automobile for Scott Field, where they were to board an Army plane which was to take them to Washington.

Scanlan's Testimony.

At yesterday's Senate subcommittee hearing, State Mine Inspector Scanlan had declared the Centralia Coal Co. was violating state mining laws designed to prevent mine disasters when the disaster occurred last week. Scanlan said an overloaded blasting charge, possibly illegally tamped with coal dust, may have caused coal dust in the mine to explode.

He said he based his findings on an inspection of the mine after the disaster. None of the six federal mine inspectors and engineers, who participated in the inspection, disagreed with his findings, he said, and at least two concurred.

Scanlan said he found one tamping bag loaded with coal dust instead of clay in violation of state mining laws.

Other testimony showed that the mine management made a practice of sending a four-day supply of blasting powder into the mine, although state and federal mining codes prohibit more than a 48-hour supply of powder.

Scanlan said mining codes were violated by failure to keep the mine adequately rock-dusted.

Reconstructs Events.

Reconstructing the probable sequence of events leading up to the disaster, Scanlan said the use of coal dust as a tamping material, in connection with an overloaded blasting charge, could have caused a flash, igniting the excessive dust in the mine. He said some of the men appeared to have been killed outright by the explosive force of the blast while others suffocated in the gasses following the explosion, which had been reduced in force by rock-dusted areas.

"When the explosion hit that rock-dusted area," Scanlan said, "it lost some of its violence and lost heat. I think rock dust kept it from getting down further. That area was rock dusted last August.

"I am satisfied there wouldn't have been an explosion if the mine had been rock-dusted and a sprinkling system installed."

Scanlan said: "I think the company was responsible to see that the mining law was obeyed."

John E. Jones of Benton, Ill., a mine safety engineer who is an adviser to the Federal Coal Mine Administrator and is a member of the Governor's fact-finding commission which earlier investigated the Centralia disaster, today testified in support of Scanlan's advocacy of rock-dusting. He said he had been a pioneer in this method of preventing dust explosions.

"If the Centralia mine had been properly rock-dusted," he said, "I am positive the explosion would have been confined to the area of the primary blast and only the men in that immediate vicinity would have been killed."

W. Randall Compton, counsel for the Federal Coal Mines Administration at Washington, testified today that McDonald was the man held responsible for safety conditions in the mine. He acknowledged, however, that Young was "operating manager" of the mine.

Compton said the Mines Administration had received complaint from miners of hazards in the mine, and about last Nov. 30 had ordered the management to correct conditions. No disciplinary action was taken against the management, as provided for under the Krug-Lewis agreement, for failure to enforce mine safety rules. Compton said the Mines Administration did not consider conditions an "imminent hazard."

Green's Name on Letter.

William E. Rowekamp, recording secretary of the United Mine Workers' local at the time, introduced into evidence a letter signed with the name of Gov. Dwight H. Green of Illinois, dated March 14, 1946, and acknowledging receipt by the Governor of a complaint by miners that safety regulations were being violated at Mine No. 5. They begged him to "save our lives" by enforcing the law.

Gov. Green, meanwhile, had said he did not see the miners' letter, which had been forwarded to Medill.

Hugh White, president for Illinois of the United Mine Workers, also testified, stating that after hearing the record of state failure to enforce mine safety rules, in the future "I would rather take a chance on the Federal Government."

The Senate hearing was held in the Centralia City Hall council chamber, crowded with miners and relatives of the mine disaster victims. They listened intently to Scanlan's testimony, as did members of the Senate subcommittee.

Opinion on Blast.

"I am of the opinion," Scanlan said, "that the explosion started from blasting at the first west section of the underground workings. I base that opinion on the direction of the travel of the force, which moved in a northeast and southeast direction. I believe it moved that way because of the indications of the extreme heat and the coke we found near the cutting face there.

"It looks like the shots were overcharged—there was too much powder used. All the shots were fired. The man who fired the shots was 500 or 600 feet away at the time. The shots are fired by fuse and you have five or 10 minutes to get away. In other sections of the mine we found that shots had not been fired."

Senator Dworshak remarked that "you seem sure that the explosion was due to an overcharge. Why?"

"The coal was just pulverized," Scanlan explained. "There were hardly any lumps in the coal. Also, there was the odor from the use of too much powder. The place still has that odor."

Tamping Bags Found.

He went on to relate that he had found two tamping bags, one filled with clay and one with coal dust. A tamping bag with coal dust is a violation of the law, he pointed out. In answer to other questions, he said the tamping bags are filled underground and that the coal dust would have been placed in the bag right at the place where the work was in progress—the cutting faces.

Tamping bags are supposed to be filled with non-combustible material. They are placed on top of a blasting charge to hold the charge in place.

"Why would a man put in coal dust?" inquired Senator O'Mahoney.

"Pure old neglect and carelessness," Scanlan answered. "I found a man using coal dust there sometime back. I reported it and the man was discharged by the company."

"If coal dust is used in a tamping bag," Senator Cordon asked, "What is the result?"

"It is that much more apt to ignite the dust in the mine," Scanlan told him.

"Could that have been the cause of the explosion?" Cordon asked.

Scanlan replied it could have been.

Then Cordon asked if the face boss in that area had been a casualty. He was, Scanlan replied.

Says Firm Was Negligent.

"Was the company negligent?" Senator Dworshak asked.

"Yes," Scanlan said, "I think the company was responsible to see that the mining law was obeyed." He emphasized his observations by waving a large paper clip. His hands rarely were idle.

At one point in his testimony Scanlan referred to a map of the mine, pointing with a stick. He showed the route of the explosive force, how rock-dusting had retarded the force, and where the men had died.

Senator Dworshak asked if it was correct that the time of the accident coincided with the time the men were to go off duty Scanlan said that was true, and reported several watches worn by the miners had stopped at 3:25 and 3:27 p.m.

He continued: "We found powder boxes that had been demolished and partially burned but the explosives in them had not gone off. We found a number of unexploded shots."

Senator O'Mahoney asked if there was any practice in the mining industry setting standards for the number of escapement shafts.

Scanlan said there was not. "The law says only that there must be an escapement shaft and that in the newer mines it must be 500 to 2000 feet from the main shaft," he said.

For Sprinkling System.

Jones, in his testimony today, supported Scanlan's repeated recommendations that a sprinkling system should have been installed in the Centralia mine. Although such a system would not be particularly useful on the haulage ways, he said, on the cutting machines it would help materially to keep down the dust.

The witness went into considerable detail on the history of rock-dusting. "The theory of rock-dusting," he said, "is that the rock dust mixes with the coal dust and reduces the percentage of combustible material." He said that the "Federal Bureau of Mines is 100 per cent in favor of rock-dusting, but I suppose there aren't more than 100 mines in the country properly rock-dusted."

Senator Dworshak wanted to know "what has the Bureau of Mines done with its expenditure of $1,500,000 a year, if the mines aren't better rock-dusted than that?" Jones replied the Bureau "has done a lot of good."

Jones declined to advance a theory as to the cause of ignition of coal dust in the Centralia mine disaster.

After naming McDonald, president of the Centralia Coal Co., as the man to whom the Mines Administration looked for enforcement of mine safety at Centralia, Compton, counsel for the Administration, said, "I haven't seen McDonald in Centralia since the disaster."

Record of Communications.

Compton introduced into the subcommittee's record a report of correspondence and telephone conversations between various Mines Administration officials concerning the Centralia mine.

These reports, going back as far as May 28, 1946, showed that the administration knew miners were dissatisfied with conditions in the mine. One of the reports, by Navy Lt. Byron S. Brooks, subarea administration director at West Frankfort, Ill., stated the men did not like it "because a doctor had been forced on the miners by the company." Brooks said also there were "bad top conditions making the workers unsteady." This was not explained

The chief complaint reported by Brooks, however, was that "the men want the mine made more safe and feel the company is not taking adequate steps to correct safety conditions."

Report on Safety.

Nov. 26, 1946, administration reports detailed by Compton showed, a Lt. Comdr. J. P. Towey, representing the administration, visited the Centralia mine, then on strike as a part of a nation-wide mine work stoppage. The Navy officer at that time reported to the administration that "the company considers the mine in first-class working order and ready to resume operations as soon as the strike ends. . . . Company executives state all safety problems are being handled satisfactorily."

Compton said a letter written by the Centralia mine union local, complaining of safety conditions Feb. 24, 1947, never reached the Mine Administration. The letter, he said, apparently was given to company executives and stopped there.

Senator Dworshak wanted to know if the administration considered itself "thoroughly informed" as to safety conditions in the mine.

"We were," Compton replied, "but we relied on reports of our local men." He said safety inspection actually was done by Bureau of Mines experts.

Senator O'Mahoney asked if after the administration was informed, in May 1946, that miners were dissatisfied with safety conditions in the mine, "an immediate inspection" was ordered. Compton said it had not been ordered and a federal inspector did not visit the mine after that until November 1946.

Accused by Senator.

W. H. Brown, mine manager since Nov. 16, 1943, in charge of underground operations, was accused by Senator O'Mahoney in the course of his testimony of failure to make clear-cut statements and unwillingness to give direct answers.

He said he had authority to handle all operating matters "unless they involved out of ordinary expenditures"; for instance, he said, he was not empowered to obtain a sprinkling system to keep down dust.

There were three outstanding recommendations for improved safety in this mine, O'Mahoney told Brown—rock-dusting, to minimize the hazard of coal dust explosion; splitting of ventilation to meet the rules on number of men served, and improved blasting methods.

"Did you make any recommendations with respect to any of these?" the Senator demanded.

Coal mining, Brown said in reply, is progressive in nature, moving into new territory continuously, and while many of the complaints about this mine seemed to be on the same violations, actually they dealt progressively with violations of the same character but in new sections.

"Why wasn't it a good thing," O'Mahoney asked, "to do rock-dusting not only in the haulage ways but also in the (digging) rooms?" There has been testimony that the rooms were largely ignored.

"I'm not denying that would be a good thing," Brown responded. "We have tried to rock-dust as frequently as possible, and the principal reason for not doing more was because we were operating the mine, getting out coal, and lacked the time."

"Yet in 1945 for three weeks you suspended mining on two days out of every week to clean up the mine, but you haven't done that since," O'Mahoney commented.

"No, not in the same manner," said Brown, explaining that some cleaning was done subsequently without stopping mining.

"We attempted a night shift," Brown said, "to remove as much coal dust and dirt as possible.

"One of Few Good Things."

"That's one of the few good things we've done."

The latter statement appeared to be a slip on Brown's part, as his testimony generally was in denial of charges of failure to take precautions.

Chairman Cordon and Senator Dworshak, the other members of the subcommittee, joined O'Mahoney in attacks on Brown's demeanor on the stand. In angry tones, Dworshak said to Brown: "I don't like your attitude on this witness stand. John L. Lewis charged that Secretary Krug was personally guilty of criminal negligence. I'm trying to find out if that is true. I think that we've be wasting our time. I demand that we subpoena somebody who can give us some information."

O'Mahoney, losing patience, said: "Mr. Brown, you give the impression of a man who doesn't want to give direct answers. We appreciate the ordeal you've undergone, but truth is truth."

—By a Post-Dispatch Staff Photographer.

DRISCOLL SCANLAN, state mine inspector, who testified before a United States Senate subcommittee at Centralia, Ill., yesterday. State mine safety laws were being violated at the time of the explosion, he said.

MOURNING WEEK COUNTS ON JOBLESS PAY PERIOD FOR ILLINOIS COAL MINERS

CHICAGO, April 5 (AP)

THE Illinois unemployment compensation law is operative for miners from the start of their six-day mourning period last Monday until their individual mines are ruled safe by their examining committees, the State Labor Department ruled yesterday.

Actually, the miners will get no pay for the first week, since applicants for compensation must go through a "waiting period" of one week. Maximum unemployment compensation is $20 weekly for 26 weeks.

Samuel C. Bernstein, Commissioner of Placement and Unemployment Compensation, announced the ruling.

Beginning Monday, the decision no longer will hold with individual mines as they are declared safe, Bernstein said. It also will not hold next week with mines not ordered closed by Krug, excxept in cases where they meanwhile are declared unsafe, he added.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 5

Brown made no reply.

"The testimony," O'Mahoney said, "is that rock-dusting was done in the haulage ways and not in the rooms. What have you to say to that?"

"We rock-dusted the entire mine to the best of our ability," Brown asserted in reply. He referred to a strike shutdown period last April when he said it was intended to do work of this nature. He said the state mine inspector had asked the mine to see if the union would permit the rock-dusting to be carried out at that time, but the union had refused to let the mine electrician work on some repairs, so no request was made for the rock-dusting.

After reopening last May 15, the mine had to shut down again May 23, but then permission was obtained from the union for rock dusting by five men, Brown related. He said this work was done over a week's period, in all of the mine, "even the working faces as far as possible."

"You never make a clear-cut statement," O'Mahoney charged the witness. "You qualify every statement you make." This brought an explanation from Brown of his last previous qualification to the effect that the rock-dusting machine moved on tracks and that some sections, lacking tracks, could not be reached.

A letter from Robert Weir, assistant state director of mines, dated last June, which accompanied an inspector's report that partial rock-dusting had been done but nothing was accomplished to eliminate hazards, was referred to by O'Mahoney.

"Do you still try to tell us the mine was rock-dusted?" O'Mahoney demanded. Brown said: "We continued to rock-dust until we completed the mine, except for entries 24 and 26 south, where the machine still stands."

"Isn't it true," asked O'Mahoney, "that, because the mine operators wanted to get as much coal as possible and workers were scarce, you didn't want to take men off their regular work to do this (rock-dusting)?"

"We certainly didn't want to take men away from production," Brown conceded.

Senator Dworshak said: "The Federal Coal Mines Administrator is responsible for the enforcement of the mine safety code. Did you receive any written instructions from the administrator?"

Brown replied:

"They would not come to me. I suppose that Mr. McDonald would have received them."

McDonald is head of the coal company.

O'Mahoney and Cordon attempted to learn what Brown had done to comply with recommendations of federal and state inspectors and also who was the operating authority at the mine itself.

Firing questions rapidly at Brown, Dworshak asked: "Were you the operating manager of Centralia Mine No. 5?"

"No."

"Do you know where McDonald is now?"

"No."

"Then you don't know whether Mr. McDonald is in Chicago, San Francisco, New York or Alaska?"

Dworshak then shouted: "We'd better concentrate on getting somebody who knows something about something else. I want the record to show that the time devoted by this committee to the testimony of Mr. Brown was absolutely wasted and worthless."

Earlier, Cordon said: "If one thing has been shown to this committee it is that there was gross negligence in the handling of the safety factors of this mine. We're trying to find out who is responsible."

There was an additional interchange between Cordon and Brown as the chairman pressed Brown for explanations of the rock-dusting situation. Cordon asked: "Do you acknowledge that the mine was not adequately rock-dusted?" "I think it was adequately rock-dusted, but not continuously," Brown admitted. It has been asserted that constant rock-dusting is a safety requisite. However, Brown said "Yes," when O'Mahoney asked: "In your opinion, was the mine sufficiently rock-dusted not to have caused the explosion?"

"Didn't Think It Was Urgent."

Walter J. Johnson, general superintendent of the mine, testified that the mine was "not adequately rock-dusted at the time of the explosion." He said, "I didn't think the matter was so urgent. We all know now that more could have been done."

Johnson said responsibility for taking safety measures was his, except for "out of ordinary" or "abnormal" expenditures. Rock-dusting came under his authority, he said, and plans had been made for more rock-dusting. Johnson said he did not have authority to install a sprinkling system, but thought this should be done, "as a health measure rather than a safety measure." Ventilation also should be improved, he said.

The general superintendent told of various difficulties in making safety corrections. He said his own time was divided between the Centralia mine and a new property being developed by the firm elsewhere in Illinois.

In response to Senator O'Mahoney's questioning, Johnson said miners who had testified at the hearing "need have no fear concerning future employment at the mine."

"Trip Rider's" Testimony.

Robert Mowen, a "trip rider," who transported explosives into the mine, disclosed the violation of state and federal mining codes limiting the amount of explosives taken into the mine.

Mowen, who worked on the night shift, told the subcommittee of the Senate Public Lands Committee he always took a four-day supply of powder for working crews when he made his deliveries. State and federal codes prohibit more than a 48-hour supply of powder in the mine at any one time, Senator O'Mahoney pointed out.

The testimony is considered significant in the light of statements by survivors that they noticed large quantities of powder smoke immediately after the explosion.

The witness, whose soft-spoken replies to Senator O'Mahoney were almost inaudible, said he took down 800 pounds of blasting powder each night and delivered it to three of the nine working places in the mine. It thus required three nights for him to reach all of the working points. Both shifts used this powder. Mowen was the only one delegated to the delivery job, he said.

A storage box was provided for each of the nine delivery points but because a wartime practice of locking the boxes had been retained by the company, Mowen delivered the powder in a pasteboard container and placed it alongside the powder storage box.

The boxes were kept in crosscuts or abandoned rooms away from "live" workings and at least 25 feet distant from the nearest power line as required by law, the witness said. The caps (detonators) and fuses were kept separated from the powder, he pointed out.

Letter Put in Record.

The letter signed with the name of Gov. Green, received by the mine union acknowledging the miner's plea for action to protect their lives, was placed in the Senate subcommittee record.

The letter, addressed to the late Jake Schmidt, president of the local, killed in the explosion last week, and to Rowekamp, read as follows:

"Dear President Schmidt and Secretary Rowekamp:

"This will acknowledge your letter of March 3, advising me that the mining board of the Department of Mines and Minerals will not take the necessary action to protect the lives and health of the men working at Mine No. 5 of the Centralia Coal Co. at Centralia, Ill.

"I am calling your letter to the attention of the director of the Department of Mines and Minerals with the request that he see that your complaint is taken up at the next meeting of the State Mining Board and given full and complete consideration at that meeting.

"Thanking you for calling this matter to my attention and assuring you that the charges which you have made will be carefully investigated, I am, sincerely yours, Dwight H. Green, Governor."

Investigators Sent.

"After you got the letter from Gov. Green," Rowekamp was asked by Senator Cordon, "did you get any word from the Mines and Minerals Department?"

He replied: "Investigators were sent to the mine by the State Mining Board. Our men were kind of hurt about it because there was no notice sent to our officers telling us that the investigators were coming. I saw the investigators at the mine so I know they were there. They didn't say anything to anybody. There were four or five of them."

Earlier, Rowekamp placed in the record the letter he wrote to Gov. Green March 3, 1946, protesting against conditions in the mine. "That's the letter the Governor sent to Medill," Rowekamp explained.

"The other night," he continued, "I met the Governor here at a hotel and he said if they (meaning the state board) didn't act on the letter, he couldn't help it."

At that point, Republican Senator Dworshak thundered: "I demand that the letter from the Governor be presented; not what the Governor said to the witness."

Rowekamp said he didn't think he had the Governor's reply, but it was found among the subcommittee's papers and was then read into the record.

Last Complaint to Agency.

On questioning by Senator O'Mahoney, it was brought out that a letter written by the union to Robert M. Medill, resigned director of the State Department of Mines, Feb. 26, 1946, expressing dissatisfaction with the state commission's report, was the last complaint by the union to any "agency."

Senator Cordon next asked if the union safety committee kept records of its inspections and findings. Rowekamp, a somewhat confused witness, said he "couldn't say," but at that point a miner in the audience, Lynn Sharp, arose and told the Senators:

"I know that two members of our safety committee made an inspection and wrote a report because I heard them discuss it. I saw them with a paper in the washhouse one day when they were talking about their inspection. I don't know what they did with it. One was Stephen Maloney (a previous witness) and he handed the paper to Paul Comfort." Comfort was killed in the explosion, as were all members of the safety committee except Maloney.

William P. Young Dozes.

While Rowekamp retold his experience in the mine the day of the explosion, Young, operating head of the coal company, wearied by all the testimony, dozed a little in his seat a few feet from the witness. The three Senators, eager to get all the facts, followed the testimony closely and questioned all witnesses expertly and in minute detail. Senator Cordon, in questioning witnesses, drew on

Continued on Next Page.

MINE OPERATOR YOUNG ADMITS IGNORING NOTICE TO END SOME HAZARDS

TELLS SENATORS HE'S RESPONSIBLE FOR CONDITIONS IN PIT AT CENTRALIA

'Thought It Would Be Possible' to Disregard Part of Safety Recommendations, Bell & Zoller Head Testifies.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 6

By SELWYN PEPPER
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 5—William P. Young, operating head of the Centralia Coal Co., admitted today that he deliberately had disregarded recommendations of United States Bureau of Mines inspectors for correcting safety hazards at Mine No. 5, where 111 men lost their lives March 25.

Young accepted full responsibility for conditions in the mine. He testified before members of the United States Senate subcommittee who concluded their hearings in Centralia today and left for Washington, where their investigation into the mine disaster will be continued next week. Secretary of the Interior Krug and John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers of America, both are scheduled to testify.

Senator Henry Dworshak (Rep.), Idaho, pressed Young at today's hearing until the mine head assumed responsibility for conditions in the Centralia mine. He was asked, first, who was responsible for making safety corrections.

"That's a legal question," Young replied. "I am not qualified to answer it."

"If you can't give us a legal answer," Dworshak persisted, "give us a realistic answer."

"I have the responsibility," said Young, "which I have assumed."

"Everybody has been passing the buck . . . " Dworshak continued.

"I'm Not Passing Buck."

"I'm not passing the buck," Young replied.

Later, Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney (Dem.), Wyoming, questioned Young concerning his compliance with federal safety inspectors' recommendations. Federal inspectors had found more than 50 violations of the mine safety code at the mine less than a week before the fatal explosion.

"Did you, as operating vice president, ever believe it was possible to disregard in part the recommendations of the inspectors and still continue to operate the mines?" Senator O'Mahoney asked.

"Yes," replied Young. "I thought that would be possible."

Young, at one point in his testimony, pointed out that Homer F. McDonald, president of the Centralia Coal Co., was only the nominal head of the firm and that he, Young, was the operating manager. Young is vice president of the Centralia firm, but president of the $1,000,000 Bell & Zoller Mining Corp., controlling operating company. McDonald, however, was named federal agent in charge of the mine, under terms of Government seizure by the Federal Coal Mines Administrator.

Summarizing Young's testimony, Senator O'Mahoney declared:

"You felt Federal Mine Inspector Frank Perz's reports should be complied with to a certain extent. You undertook to see that the mine general superintendent, Walter J. Johnson, was instructed to comply. You notified McDonald that this was being done. You ordered pipe for a sprinkling system, but you had not taken any step regarding rock-dusting or the installation of electric lamps on miners' caps . . . "

"About the electric lamps," said Young, "we did not take any steps. About the rock-dusting—I felt sufficient dusting had been done already."

Young said he had not complied with some of the Federal inspector's recommendations because "some were major and some were minor, depending on the inspector's feelings. I didn't intend to disregard any major recommendations—because the inspector wouldn't let us."

Young testified that the lack of compliance with inspection recommendations "was more a matter of time than of expense." He said many safety measures had been started, but not completed.

Agrees Dust Was Hazard.

He agreed with Senator Guy Cordon (Rep.), Oregon, subcommittee chairman, that excessive amounts of coal dust in the mine "constituted a hazard," and also that "adequate rock-dusting could have allayed the dust. . . . At times we thought the mine was adequately rock-dusted, but in six or seven months the effect would wear off."

To determine the need for rock-dusting, Young said he "went down in the mine two or three times a year."

He said he saw federal inspectors' reports, which had described the dusty condition of the mine, but "not the state reports. They weren't sent to me." Young's office is in Chicago.

"What had you done about the federal reports?" he was asked.

"Well," Young said, "we had ordered the pipe for the sprinkler system. I don't know when it will be delivered."

Calls Condition Common.

The witness said dusty mines were common in Illinois. "I don't offer this as an excuse," he said, "but I don't know of any mine in which working rooms are rock-dusted. Conditions here are no worse than in other mines.

"We've had a terrible disaster. It could have happened anywhere."

Senator Cordon pointed out that the federal mine safety code requires rock-dusting inside working rooms, to within 80 feet of the working faces. "Since this was not the general practice, you felt you were entitled to disregard it, is that right?" he asked.

"As far as I know," Young said, "gas and shooting (blasting) were the only two things to be considered with regard to explosions. As for gas, this was not a gassy mine. As for shooting—we were using a 'permissible explosive.'

"Since the disaster, we might as well throw 'permissible explosives' out the window."

Although he previously had said he considered dust a hazard, Young, in response to a question by Senator O'Mahoney, said, "It's my honest conviction that the recommendation of the inspectors regarding coal dust was only for the convenience of the men." Both state and federal mine inspectors had recommended that dust be cleared off the mine roads. Senator Cordon turned quickly toward the witness.

"Mr. Young," he said, "if you don't agree that all these recommended precautions are necessary, simply say so."

Young said nothing, but nodded his head in apparent agreement.

Disagrees With Scanlan.

The mine head said he disagreed with an opinion, offered earlier by State Mine Inspector Driscoll Scanlan, that the fatal explosion of dust in the mine had been detonated by a faulty blasting charge, overloaded with explosive powder, and possibly tamped with coal dust instead of clay.

"It is my information," Young said, "that the explosion was not caused by a 'windy shot.' I don't know what Scanlan means. The shooting in the mine was all normal."

Young said the management had disregarded the recommendation that electric safety lamps be used on miners' caps, because they thought the union would object. He admitted, however, that the question had never been discussed with any union representative.

As for electric detonators for blasting charges—also recommended by inspectors, to replace fuses—Young said they would do no good so long as open-flame cap lamps were used.

Senator O'Mahoney asked if miners who had testified before the subcommittee would be penalized by the management. Young said they would not.

"All the miners I heard," Young said, "gave honest testimony."

Payments to Dependents.

At the conclusion of Young's testimony, O'Mahoney introduced excerpts from the Illinois Workmen's Compensation Law and pointed out that any payments to dependents under this code came, not from the state, but from funds of the mine operators. The operators may provide these funds through surety bonds or insurance.

"I am informed by Harrison Combs (general counsel of the United Mine Workers at Washington)," said O'Mahoney, "that the payment for a death victim without dependents is $150. Payments to dependents of victims are determined by a statutory formula depending on the number of dependents."

It has been pointed out heretofore that the range of such payments is $4000 to $6000.

Chairman Cordon was asked by a reporter after the session if he considered the Illinois compensation provisions adequate. He replied: "I leave it to Illinois to determine the amount of compensation, but I would increase it."

Senator Cordon thanked everyone who had participated in the hearings, just before adjourning the session. He said the next session, in Washington, would be held "within two weeks."

Subcommittee members left by automobile for Scott Field, where they were to board an Army plane which was to take them to Washington.

Scanlan's Testimony.

At yesterday's Senate subcommittee hearing, State Mine Inspector Scanlan had declared the Centralia Coal Co. was violating state mining laws designed to prevent mine disasters when the disaster occurred last week. Scanlan said an overloaded blasting charge, possibly illegally tamped with coal dust, may have caused coal dust in the mine to explode.

He said he based his findings on an inspection of the mine after the disaster. None of the six federal mine inspectors and engineers, who participated in the inspection, disagreed with his findings, he said, and at least two concurred.

Scanlan said he found one tamping bag loaded with coal dust instead of clay in violation of state mining laws.

Other testimony showed that the mine management made a practice of sending a four-day supply of blasting powder into the mine, although state and federal mining codes prohibit more than a 48-hour supply of powder.

Scanlan said mining codes were violated by failure to keep the mine adequately rock-dusted.

Reconstructs Events.

Reconstructing the probable sequence of events leading up to the disaster, Scanlan said the use of coal dust as a tamping material, in connection with an overloaded blasting charge, could have caused a flash, igniting the excessive dust in the mine. He said some of the men appeared to have been killed outright by the explosive force of the blast while others suffocated in the gasses following the explosion, which had been reduced in force by rock-dusted areas.

"When the explosion hit that rock-dusted area," Scanlan said, "it lost some of its violence and lost heat. I think rock dust kept it from getting down further. That area was rock dusted last August.

"I am satisfied there wouldn't have been an explosion if the mine had been rock-dusted and a sprinkling system installed."

Scanlan said: "I think the company was responsible to see that the mining law was obeyed."

Support for Scanlan's Position.

John E. Jones of Benton, Ill., a mine safety engineer who is an adviser to the Federal Coal Mine Administrator and is a member of the Governor's fact-finding commission which earlier investigated the Centralia disaster, today testified in support of Scanlan's advocacy of rock-dusting. He said he had been a pioneer in this method of preventing dust explosions.

"If the Centralia mine had been properly rock-dusted," he said, "I am positive the explosion would have been confined to the area of the primary blast and only the men in that immediate vicinity would have been killed."

'I Have the Responsibility---'

—By a Post-Dispatch Staff Photographer.

WILLIAM P. YOUNG, vice president of the Centralia Coal Co., testifying before the Senate subcommittee yesterday.

W. H. Brown, mine manager since Nov. 16, 1943, in charge of underground operations, was accused by Senator O'Mahoney in the course of his testimony of failure to make clear-cut statements and unwillingness to give direct answers.

He said he had authority to handle all operating matters "unless they involved out of ordinary expenditures"; for instance, he said, he was not empowered to obtain a sprinkling system to keep down dust.

There were three outstanding recommendations for improved safety in this mine, O'Mahoney told Brown—rock-dusting, to minimize the hazard of coal dust explosion; splitting of ventilation to meet the rules on number of men served, and improved blasting methods.

"Did you make any recommendations with respect to any of these?" the Senator demanded.

Coal mining, Brown said in reply, is progressive in nature, moving into new territory continuously, and while many of the complaints about this mine seemed to be on the same violations, actually they dealt progressively with violations of the same character but in new sections.

"Why wasn't it a good thing," O'Mahoney asked, "to do rock-dusting not only in the haulage ways but also in the (digging) rooms?" There has been testimony that the rooms were largely ignored.

"I'm not denying that would be a good thing," Brown responded. "We have tried to rock-dust as frequently as possible, and the principal reason for not doing more was because we were operating the mine, getting out coal, and lacked the time."

"Yet in 1945 for three weeks you suspended mining on two days out of every week to clean up the mine, but you haven't done that since," O'Mahoney commented.

"No, not in the same manner," said Brown, explaining that some cleaning was done subsequently without stopping mining.

"We attempted a night shift," Brown said, "to remove as much coal dust and dirt as possible.

"One of Few Good Things."

"That's one of the few good things we've done."

The latter statement appeared to be a slip on Brown's part, as his testimony generally was in denial of charges of failure to take precautions.

Chairman Cordon and Senator Dworshak, the other members of the subcommittee, joined O'Mahoney in attacks on Brown's demeanor on the stand. In angry tones, Dworshak said to Brown:

"I don't like your attitude on this witness stand. John L. Lewis charged that Secretary Krug was personally guilty of criminal negligence. I'm trying to find out if that is true. I think that we've be wasting our time. I demand that we subpoena somebody who can give us some information."

O'Mahoney, losing patience, said: "Mr. Brown, you give the impression of a man who doesn't want to give direct answers. We appreciate the ordeal you've undergone, but truth is truth."

Brown made no reply.

"The testimony," O'Mahoney said, "is that rock-dusting was done in the haulage ways and not in the rooms. What have you to say to that?"

"We rock-dusted the entire mine to the best of our ability," Brown asserted in reply. He referred to a strike shutdown period last April when he said it was intended to do work of this nature. He said the state mine inspector had asked the mine to see if the union would permit the rock-dusting to be carried out at that time, but the union had refused to let the mine electrician work on some repairs, so no request was made for the rock-dusting.

After reopening last May 15, the mine had to shut down again May 23, but then permission was obtained from the union for rock dusting by five men, Brown related. He said this work was done over a week's period, in all of the mine, "even the working faces as far as possible."

"You never make a clear-cut statement," O'Mahoney charged the witness. "You qualify every statement you make." This brought an explanation from Brown of his last previous qualification to the effect that the rock-dusting machine moved on tracks and that some sections, lacking tracks, could not be reached.

Letter From Weir.

A letter from Robert Weir, assistant state director of mines, dated last June, which accompanied an inspector's report that partial rock-dusting had been done but nothing was accomplished to eliminate hazards, was referred to by O'Mahoney.

"Do you still try to tell us the mine was rock-dusted?" O'Mahoney demanded. Brown said: "We continued to rock-dust until we completed the mine, except for entries 24 and 26 south, where the machine still stands."

"Isn't it true," asked O'Mahoney, "that, because the mine operators wanted to get as much coal as possible and workers were scarce, you didn't want to take men off their regular work to do this (rock-dusting)?"

"We certainly didn't want to take men away from production," Brown conceded.

Senator Dworshak said: "The Federal Coal Mines Administrator is responsible for the enforcement of the mine safety code. Did you receive any written instructions from the administrator?"

Brown replied:

"They would not come to me. I suppose that Mr. McDonald would have received them."

McDonald is head of the coal company.

Scanlan Gives Possible Cause of Blast

Continued From Preceding Page.

his 11 years' experience as a prosecuting attorney in southern Oregon. He was often wreathed in smoke from his pipe and cigars.

"If I had thought there was any real danger in that mine," Rowekamp declared in answering questions about safety, "I would have quit."

"Did the safety committee ever recommend that the miners be removed from any unsafe area?" Senator Cordon asked.

"Not that I know of," the witnes answered. He could not recall what, if anything, was done about the local's demand that Norman Prudent and Brown be fired from their supervisory jobs at the mine and be deprived of their mine manager's certificates.

Says 500 Were Ordered Back.

White testified that Capt. N. H. Collisson, Federal Coal Mines Administrator, ordered 500 miners to return to work at Peabody Coal Co.'s Mine No. 47 at Harrisburg, Ill., after the union's mine safety committee had ordered the men to leave their jobs because of hazardous conditions. He was unable to recall the date of the incident, but said it occurred shortly after the federal safety code went into effect last July 24.

"Capt. Collisson wrote me a letter ordering me to send the men back to work," White told the committee. "He didn't threaten to invoke the Smith-Connally Act, but he went all around it."

Senator Cordon and Senator O'Mahoney had been attempting to learn why White took no action after he received a copy of a report by Federal Inspector Frank Perz on an inspection of the Centralia mine made last November. More than 50 violations of the code were found in the inspection.

Wants to Be Sure.

"If that attempt to remove the men from the mine under the terms of the contract failed, I can understand that further efforts in that field would be useless," Senator Cordon commented, "but I would like to be sure."

White agreed to send him copies of the correspondence pertaining to the incident.

The burly union officer began his testimony by reporting that all locals were given copies of the contract between the union and the Government and copies of all explanations and interpretations prepared by the Coal Mines Administrator. Union district board members, he said, were instructed to explain the contract to local unions.

He read a prepared statement in which he charged a condition of the "imminent danger" at the mine had been shown by Perz's November report. Consequently, he said, the mine should have been closed by the Coal Mines Administrator.

Lists "Imminent" Hazards.

He listed as "imminent" hazards the following violations shown in the report:

Use of the blasting caps and fuses.

More than 100 men in the mine on one air split.

Air measurements in two places of less than 6000 cubic feet a minute.

Air samples containing less oxygen and more carbon dioxide than required.

Dust.

Failure to rock dust working rooms, and presence of haulageway coal dust with a higher than permissible combustible content.

"Secretary of the Interior Krug did nothing but write very polite letters to the company," White charged. "He was guilty of criminal negligence and should resign. Coal miners' lives are more important than his tenure in office. Apparently the only thing which prevents him from enforcing these laws is the desire to do so."

White asserted the operators of the mine and Medill were equally guilty.

"One hundred men die and 12,000 to 15,000 men are injured monthly in coal-mine accidents," he concluded. "Unfortunately, the public will soon forget until the occurrence of the next tragedy. Future tragedies can be prevented."

Senator O'Mahoney then attempted to learn what action White had taken personally to avert the disaster. After repeated questions had failed to elicit a response which the Senator considered satisfactory, he asked directly: "What did you do about it?"

"What did Secretary Krug do about it?" White asked in reply.

"I'm not a witness here, I'm just asking the questions, Mr. White," Senator O'Mahoney said. The audience laughed.

White, somewhat annoyed, said, "I'm attempting to tell you what I did." He asserted the walkout late last year was to enforce provisions of the safety code. Every bituminous coal mine in the United States was unsafe, he charged.

Senator Cordon said. "Mr. White, I think you and I can be more frank and to the point than that."

Points Out Obligation.

He pointed out the obligation of the mine safety committees under the contract to call out the men if mines were unsafe. White then told about the incident at the Harrisburg mine.

"As far as I have been able to learn, there was no one in authority at the Centralia mine who would have been able to carry out the recommendations of the inspectors," he said.

He asserted one reason why the operators had been unable to obtain workers to clean up the mine on Sundays was that the average age of men at the Centralia mine was about 55. They were working nine hours a day, six days a week, he said.

"Considering the working conditions at the mine, the men were physically unable to work a seventh day," White said. Senator Cordon agreed and asked whether the state or Federal Government should have exclusive authority to enforce mine safety regulations.

Prefers Federal Government.

In an obvious reference to testimony about Medill's operation of the State Mines Department, White replied: "I would rather take a chance on the Federal Government, after hearing what has taken place here today."

Senator Cordon asked White what he thought of the distinction between "hazard" and "imminent hazard" in the federal safety code.

"Throughout the coal industry, the judgments of no two men on that point are the same," the union president asserted.

He concluded with the statement that the United Mine Workers' Union opposed the reappointment of Medill in 1945, although it had indorsed him in 1941. Medill had testified previously he had been selected with union approval.

Branson's Testimony.

State Representative Branson, Centralia, testified:

"Some time ago Medill stopped me in a corridor of the State House and asked me something about transferring Scanlan from the State Mines Department. If I remember correctly, Medill wanted to make him a federal inspector.

"I said I didn't want it done because Scanlan was a good inspector. Medill complained that the reports were too long and tedious, but I don't remember the details. I kept Scanlan from losing his job.

"There has been a hatred between Medill and Scanlan for a good long while."

Branson was obviously extremely angry when he first took the stand. After the committee reporter had read Scanlan's reference to Branson in testimony Thursday, the Representative complained repeatedly of a newspaper account of the testimony.

Says Pressure Was Implied.

The paper, though he did not identify it by name, was the Centralia Sentinel. Branson asserted that the account implied he had brought pressure on Scanlan to force him to shorten his reports.

"I want to tell you the facts and make sure they are thoroughly understood, especially by newspaper reporters," he said. "The newspaper reporters have been very unfair to me."

He demanded Scanlan be called to corroborate his (Branson's) version of the conversation until both Senators Cordon and O'Mahoney assured him they had not been under the impression that he had put any pressure on the inspector.

Branson complained about the account repeatedly in his testimony, provoking laughter from the audience each time.

"I am particularly interested," he said at one point, in a voice charged with anger, "because I live with these people—this is my home. I have been interested in doing something to clear up this situation for the last 22 years.

He recommended that full authority for the enforcement of safety regulations be given only to one agency.

"What's everybody's business is nobody's business," he said. "We must pass laws so this won't happen again."

"No, sir," was Medill's reply.

All the surviving miners who testified yesterday agreed the power failure was the first notice they had of the explosion. None apparently felt that conditions in the mine that day were unusual—"just dusty and dry as always." All described confusion and indecision into which they were thrown by the billows of powder smoke and dust that indicated what had happened.

William E. Auberry, financial secretary of the union, who was not in the mine when the explosion occurred, told the senatorial investigators blasting was done while the men were still in the mine. The miners, he said, would enter the man-trap and wait there for those who remained behind to light the fuses.

Senator O'Mahoney asked him if he knew that under Section 49 of the Illinois general mining laws, shot firers were not permitted to do any blasting until all men were out of the mine. Auberry said he knew of the law.

"I'd say they (the union safety committee) had that up with the company a dozen times since they put in the automatic loading machines but were always told by Mr. Prudent (former general superintendent) he had a right to do this as long as not more than two pounds of powder were used in a shot," he said.

In answer to a further question by O'Mahoney, the witness said the mine did not employ shot firers. He said the drillers drilled the holes and the driller's helper cleaned it out and tamped the charge. The Senator then read into the record Section 47 of the state code which requires employment of shot firers "in all mines in this state where coal is blasted, and where more than two pounds of powder is used for any one blast."

Critical of Ventilation.

Auberry was critical also of the ventilation near the working faces. He said he operated a cutting machine and that curtains (used in mines to direct air currents) had been abandoned gradually in the area in which he worked. He said he had complained of the air to the face boss but that little was done except on one occasion when the federal mine inspector and the state inspector, Scanlan, called attention to the need for a curtain it was put up.

Norman Lewis, Odin, Ill., a miner, said coal dust was sometimes a foot deep in the rooms.

"The rooms were never cleaned out, to the best of my knowledge, although once they did clean out the haulage ways," he said. "The mine was rock dusted only once in the five years I worked there but very little of the rock dust got into the rooms. No. 5 mine was the driest and dirtiest mine I ever worked in."

He said he had made complaints himself and knew of complaints made by the mine safety committee but that little was done.

August Holzhauer, a miner since 1918, said he considered the dust a real hazard.

"We knew it wasn't good for our health and we felt it was a real safety hazard as well," he said. "The only time we got any action on complaints was when Mr. Scanlan was going to close the mine down. They cleaned it up and rock-dusted it then but within six months it was as bad as ever again."

Describes Dust.

John Pick Jr., a miner whose father was killed in the blast, told the subcommittee he was a trip rider and that at times he was unable to see the motorman 60 feet away because of the dust in suspension.

Pick said the dust hazard could have been cured by removing the excess coal dust from the mine, by rock-dusting or by wetting. He was asked by Senator Cordon how many attempts had been made to clean it up.

"Several times," Pick replied, "but they simply moved the dust from the tracks to the sides of the haulage way. There was a rock-dusting machine down in one entry for several months but I never saw it being used on any of my runs."

Senator Dworshak, in his questioning, displayed great interest in what steps were taken by the union mine safety committee to have the dust hazard abated. The replies, for the most part, indicated the committee had made protests to the mine management from time to time but usually without marked success. He appeared interested also in the effectiveness of the federal mine inspections. None of the witnesses could enlighten him on this point.

Firing questions rapidly at Brown, Dworshak asked: "Were you the operating manager of Centralia Mine No. 5?"

"No."

"Do you know where McDonald is now?"

"No."

"Then you don't know whether Mr. McDonald is in Chicago, San Francisco, New York or Alaska?"

Dworshak then shouted: "We'd better concentrate on getting somebody who knows something about something else. I want the record to show that the time devoted by this committee to the testimony of Mr. Brown was absolutely wasted and worthless."

There was an additional interchange between Cordon and Brown as the chairman pressed Brown for explanations of the rock-dusting situation. Cordon asked: "Do you acknowledge that the mine was not adequately rock-dusted?" "I think it was adequately rock-dusted, but not continuously," Brown admitted. It has been asserted that constant rock-dusting is a safety requisite. However, Brown said "Yes," when O'Mahoney asked: "In your opinion, was the mine sufficiently rock-dusted not to have caused the explosion?"

Searching further, the Senator inquired: "There was no attention paid by any of your superiors as to whether you ran the mine in a safe or unsafe condition?"

Brown said he certainly did not agree with that. It was at that point that Cordon asserted that if the inquiry produced one fact it was that there had been gross negligence in the handling of the safety factors at the mine.

Senator O'Mahoney broke in and began reading from correspondence and from reports of the mining inspectors. In rapid fire manner he questioned Brown as follows:

"Did you have authority to install sprinklers?"

"No, sir."

"Did you have authority to put in the airsplit?"

"I have been trying to follow a plan."

After Dworshak interjected that he did not like Brown's attitude as a witness, O'Mahoney asked the superintendent: "Did you ever talk to your superiors about the recommendations?"

"Yes, but not to McDonald."

"Did you ever notify McDonald personally?"

"I did not. The only information I had that McDonald was the operating manager were copies of correspondence from Perz."

"Could you act without prior approval?"

"No," Brown replied.

W. Randall Compton, counsel for the Federal Coal Mines Administration at Washington, testified today that McDonald was the man held responsible for safety conditions in the Centralia mine. He acknowledged, however, that Young was the "operating manager."

Compton said the agency had received complaints from miners of hazards in the mine and about last Nov. 30 had ordered the management to correct conditions. No disciplinary action was taken against the management. Compton said he did not consider that conditions constituted an "imminent hazard."

SOFT COAL STOCKPILES 15 PER CENT UNDER WHAT THEY WERE A YEAR AGO

WASHINGTON, April 5 (AP)

THE Solid Fuels Administration reported tonight that almost 50,000,000 tons of soft coal were in consumers' stockpiles on March 1.

This was an increase of 0.6 per cent over the stockpile tonnage on Feb. 1. However, the stockpiles were 15.5 per cent below April 1, 1946, when they aggregated 58,531,000 tons.

In the week ending March 29, the one before the AFL-United Mine Workers' memorial holiday, production of soft coal reached an estimated 12,150,000 tons.

For the first three months of 1947, or through March 29, soft-coal production was about 162,422,000 tons, an increase of 0.6 per cent over the 161,530,000 tons mined in the equivalent period of last year.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 6

INQUIRY ON STATE POLITICS IN MINE BLAST DEMANDED

Madden of Indiana Refers to G.O.P. Fund Solicitation — Lewis Parries Questions.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 4

By GEORGE H. HALL
A Washington Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

WASHINGTON, April 4 — Representative Madden (Dem.), Indiana, said today he would press his demand for a Congressional investigation of the part played by politics in the Centralia (Ill.) mine disaster that took 111 lives.

His declaration to this effect was made yesterday before a House subcommittee that spent the entire day listening to the oratory of John L. Lewis, head of the United Mine Workers. The motion was ruled out of order by the chairman, Representative Schwabe (Rep.), Missouri.

"The coal operators have been feeding the state politicians for years," Madden said. "That's the main reason for the Centralia catastrophe."

The motion was that Gov. Dwight Green of Illinois, the chairman of the Republican State committee and coal operators be required to tell the committee what campaign contributions were made last fall.

There were cries of dismay from the Republican committee members, most of whom, with Lewis, had steered away from a discussion of specific Illinois state responsibility for the explosion. First to object was Representative Owens (Rep.), Chicago.

Schwabe Explains Ruling.

Schwabe explained his ruling by stating that Madden's motion involved political considerations that were not within the province of the committee. The committee, a subcommittee of the Labor and Education Committee, wanted only to obtain suggestions for improving mine safety, he added. He conceded the motion might be in order in closed session.

Madden said later he would fight to have the motion adopted, in executive or in open session, and would demand a roll-call vote on it. He is a member of the full committee but not the subcommittee. His plan would be to send a small group to Illinois to make the inquiry.

Madden's proposal came at the end of the afternoon. For a total of more than five hours the committee had sat in the glare of klieg lights listening to Lewis and trying to get in a few questions.

Lewis Monopolizes Hearing.

Lewis, conscious of the fact that his words were going out over the radio and that numerous photographers were recording his appearance on celluloid, stole every scene he could. By shrewdly parrying questions or turning them to his advantage, he ended the day by saying virtually nothing that he had not planned in advance.

He filibustered, shifted and put on an act that has had few parallels at the Capitol. He consumed exactly 40 minutes answering the first four simple questions put to him in the afternoon session. Immediately after this marathon, he asked leave to "illuminate for a second" a certain point. He spoke, or preached, for 12½ minutes.

Most of his remarks had little to do with the subject immediately at hand. Also, most of them had been made before, either at press conferences or before congressional committees.

Whenever he seemed at a loss for a climactic way of ending an observation, he lambasted Secretary of the Interior Krug, whom he holds responsible for conditions at the Centralia mine by reason of his position as top operator of the mines for the Government.

From time to time during the day, as Lewis quoted statistics or read letters and resolutions, his subalterns distributed mimeographed copies of the material to reporters.

Clashes With Congressmen.

It was not until late in the hearing, when he tangled with Madden, Representative Fisher (Dem.), Texas, and Representative Hoffman (Rep.), Michigan, that Lewis's self-confidence seemed at all to weaken.

At one time or another, each of these three managed to put him on the defensive, if only momentarily. Previously he had adopted an unshakable offense as his best tactic, dominating the hearing by his loquacity and aggressiveness.

At one point, after an exchange with Fisher, he said carefully, glowering at the Congressman:

"I doubt if you can trick me into any admission that will be of help to you."

Illinois Fund Solicitation.

Madden, who read excerpts from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and the Chicago Sun, said that Driscoll Scanlan, the Illinois state mine inspector at Centralia, had reported more than two years ago to Robert M. Medill, director of the Illinois State Department of Mines and Minerals, that the Centralia mine was unsafe and that Medill refused to heed his plea that the mine be closed.

"Medill was appointed by Gov. Green," Madden remarked. "I hold no brief for negligence, but you have been discussing the negligence of Krug and it seems to me this will place Green along with Krug or anyone. If there is such a thing as criminal negligence, this should incriminate Green."

Lewis said he did not know the circumstances as to whether Green was "privy to the knowledge" Medill had.

Newspaper Quoted.

"The Post-Dispatch quotes Scanlan as saying the campaign quota of the mine owners was set at $25,000, the small ones to give $100 and larger ones $1000. If this is true, would it not be impossible for the state to enforce the laws?"

"All I know," said Lewis, "is what I read in that paper."

Madden read part of a telegram sent to Lewis by officers of UMW District 30 at Lexington, Ky. This said that the Kentucky State Department of Mines and Minerals "is owned and controlled by the coal operators."

"Might that not be the case in Illinois also?" Madden asked.

"It might be," Lewis said, "but I am not informed sufficiently about the situation in Illinois."

"Well, I believe the mines and minerals department under Gov. Green was highly negligent," Madden asserted.

Holds Green Not at Fault.

Previously, a somewhat similar line of questioning was followed by Fisher, who stood up well under the baleful glance and quick counter-thrusts of the mine chieftain.

Fisher noted that Lewis had imputed criminal negligence to Krug and also had said the State of Illinois had failed to enforce the coal mine regulations (Lewis said no state enforcement was effective), and he asked:

"Do you attribute criminal negligence to the Governor of Illinois?"

"No," said Lewis, "the Governor of Illinois has made public statements and removed the director (Medill)."

"But that was after the explosion (of March 25)."

Lewis agreed that it was.

"Then the people in Illinois who fail to enforce the laws are not criminally negligent, but Krug is?"

"That is not my testimony."

"That is the effect of it."

"No. We had a contract with Krug."

Lewis went on to say that Green had a mining department which was responsible but that the department was "deficient and negligent."

"I agree with Scanlan," he said, "that Robert Medill blocked enforcement of the safety regulations. I am informed Medill has been removed. I pray the same fate for Mr. Krug."

"Is it your position that if the Government had not taken over the mine at Centralia this accident would not have happened?" Fisher asked.

"I don't have the answer to that," Lewis responded.

He added later that in his opinion the contract the UMW might have signed with the operators of the Centralia mine would have required the enforcement of safety recommendations.

Lack of Union Complaint.

Fisher then returned to the provision in the Krug-Lewis agreement of last May 29, under which the Government is operating the mines, which sets out the authority possessed by a local union committee at the mine to force closing of the pit if danger appears imminent. Lewis has maintained that the miners feared to exercise this right because of the "yellow-dog injunction," as he calls it, which put an end to the work stoppage of last November and December, and because of provisions of the Smith-Connally Labor Disputes Act.

"Your excuse for not invoking this section of the contract is that the miners were intimidated, is that it?" Fisher asked.

"I don't have an excuse," Lewis thundered.

"Why didn't you personally appeal to Krug? You had the federal inspection reports. You knew of the violations at the mine."

"We were in war," Lewis shot back, referring to his troubles with the Government. "Haven't you heard? Least of all could we take up a matter with Krug."

"You say you knew about the dangerous condition, but did not inform Krug of your information because of the bad feeling between you?"

Here Lewis said he could not be tricked.

Asked if he had consulted his lawyers as to whether the miners would have violated the injunction or the Smith-Connally Act by insisting that the men leave a dangerous mine, Lewis replied that he had and that he had been informed the Justice Department probably would have held the action to be a violation and have filed another contempt citation.

Hoffman Interrupts Oratory.

Hoffman, an ultra-conservative, was the first questioner to make a real effort to quiet Lewis's belligerence and force him to answer a simple question simply and then stop.

"You said the miners were intimidated, said Hoffman.

"Yes."

"You yourself weren't intimidated?"

"Oh, yes, I was."

"You were?"

"Yes, I was intimidated. If you don't think the Supreme Court can intimidate a man, try it."

"Enemy of Our Union."

"How do you distinguish between a work stoppage for memorial purposes, which has been declared, and one for reason of safety violations, which was not declared? Both are in the contract."

Lewis replied rather lamely that the provision for designating a memorial period had never had a court test. He added:

"I recognize you as being an enemy of our union."

He said at another point that the idea of the memorial period had existed for many years, that it was written in a 1941 contract whose provisions were carried over in the Krug-Lewis agreement, that it had been "dormant because of the restraint of our organization" and desire to mine coal during the war.

Asked if it wouldn't have been better if the miners had stayed on the job and contributed the money they made to the families of the Centralia victims, Lewis replied the miners have practiced this course for generations. He said the only voluntary contribution to the families of 24 men killed two years ago in an explosion at Straight Creek, Ky., was "a miserable, lousy $20 bill."

"There is no balm in Gilead for the coal miner so far as the public conscience is concerned," Lewis shouted. "Would Congress be investigating this disaster if it wasn't for the memorial shutdown? This is Krug's death-bed confession, and, oh God, what a grotesque, monstrous mistake he is in the position he occupies."

Observers who watched Lewis closely at the peak periods of his oratory noted a strange phenomenon. He appeared to be breathing smoke. From a certain angle the powerful klieg lights caught the faint mist in his exhaled breath and magnified it so that he seemed almost to fume at the mouth.

Lewis described over and over again the acknowledged hardships and dangers of a miner's life. He said he had worked in coal mines many years and once had been saved from death by a "miracle." He heard an explosion coming down the tunnel of a mine he was in, he said, and dropped into an inch of water on the floor and pulled his shirt over his face to await death. By some miracle he was saved, he said; the blast did not reach him.

Asked by Representative Nixon (Rep.), California, whether the miners would go back to work next Monday after the memorial period is over, he said "they'll go back to any mine that is safe." Later he said that Krug's action yesterday in closing 518 mines believed to be unsafe was one step in assuring their return and that during the present shutdown many repairs would be made. His hearers couldn't be sure, however, whether Lewis meant to insist on a return to all safe mines Monday.

After Lewis had asserted his belief that the miners had always been persecuted and clubbed, and had compared them to a bull being baited in a bull ring while the populace cheered, he was asked by Nixon if he thought government operation was the answer.

"Perish the thought, Congressman," Lewis said, "perish the thought. I am for free enterprise. We're witnessing government operation now. It would be insane for the government to take over permanently."

Representative Kearns (Rep.), Pennsylvania, asked Lewis if he could assure him the memorial period was not "grandstand play" induced by the Supreme Court anti-strike ruling.

"I had no ulterior motive," Lewis snapped. "Our people are tired of working in Krug's slaughterhouses."

Again ranging far afield, Lewis, in response to questions, asserted his opposition to any possible bar on the closed shop or industry-wide bargaining, such as is contemplated in some legislation before Congress. He told at length why he considers industry-wide bargaining essential in the coal industry.

He conceded that not all operators were wicked. He said there were a great number who tried to do a decent job but these were penalized by the refusal of the others.

One of Lewis's major points was that if young men are to be induced to enter coal mining conditions will have to be improved. He said the average age of the miners killed at Centralia was 55.

"The age is symbolic of what is occurring. Young men no longer seek employment in coal mines; it is too hazardous. It is something for Americans to consider where new miners are coming from."

He said the United States is going in the same direction as England. Our mines, he said, are six times as productive and four times as dangerous.

"We pay for our efficiency," he added. "We kill more because we are in a hurry."

Representative Kersten (Rep.), Wisconsin, said he was amazed to find that there are no federal criminal penalties for failing to bring about safe mining conditions, and that there should be actual criminal penalties for operators who run dangerous mines.

The committee expects to invite Krug to testify, probably after the Easter recess.

—By a Post-Dispatch Staff Photographer.

Widows of miners killed in the Centralia blast sitting with friends at the opening of the Senate investigation in Centralia. From left: MRS. ARTHUR CARTER with a friend, and MRS. JOHN GROTTI, also with a companion.

COAL MINE SAFETY CODE WITH TEETH IN IT PREDICTED BY TWO SENATORS

O'Mahoney and Cordon Say Legislation Will Be Offered—Question of State or Federal Control.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 6

By a Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 5—Enactment of a coal mining safety code, "with teeth in it," as a result of the senatorial investigation of last week's mine explosion here, was predicted today by two of the members of the Senate subcommittee. One of them declared this would constitute a monument to the 111 miners who lost their lives in the disaster March 25.

The statements were made by Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney (Dem.), Wyoming, and the subcommittee chairman, Senator Guy Cordon (Rep.), Oregon, in an informal discussion with reporters. They spoke immediately after adjournment of the Centralia portion of their investigation.

"I would like to say, in my own behalf," O'Mahoney stated earnestly, "that I am confident that one monument to the men who lost their lives in the Centralia mine will be an improved safety code for the operation of mines in the United States."

Cordon broke in: "I want to add my amen to that."

"Do you mean a safety code with teeth?" a reporter asked O'Mahoney, who replied: "Absolutely."

Standard Code Urged.

Cordon continued: "I haven't any doubt that legislation will result from this inquiry. I haven't any opinion as to whether federal control is the answer, or whether there should be co-operation among the states on adoption of a standard safety code. There must be a standard code, with teeth in it."

The suggestion has been made from various quarters that the federal Bureau of Mines should be given power to enforce safety regulations, which it now lacks. Control of safety is essentially a state matter now, and it has been shown that the Illinois Department of Mines and Minerals ignored or sought to gloss over miners' and a state mine inspector's complaints about the hazards at the Centralia mine.

The senatorial committee is to resume its inquiry at Washington before making a report. Chairman Cordon was asked by the Post-Dispatch correspondent if he had drawn any conclusions from the evidence adduced here.

"I am going to withhold judgment," he replied, "until we get a full report of the findings of the commission which went down into the mine and made an investigation on the ground. These findings will have to be studied carefully."

He was referring to the work of a group of federal mine inspectors who made a detailed study of conditions in the mine this week, seeking evidence on the cause of the explosion.

Study of Coal Samples.

Physical and chemical laboratory examinations of material which these inspectors brought from the mine must be made at Washington, Cordon continued. This will include study of samples of coal, which State Mine Inspector Driscoll Scanlan had testified was pulverized by the force of the blast. One objective is to determine the intensity of the heat generated by the explosion.

"We need to get a real picture of what happened," Cordon remarked.

Cordon was asked whether Homer F. McDonald of Chicago, president of Centralia Coal Co. and an officer of the Bell & Zoller coal group, would be called as a witness before the subcommittee at Washington.

"I don't think McDonald could give us anything of advantage, but he still may testify," Cordon said.

The inference was that McDonald would not be summoned but could appear voluntarily if he chose. He has told the Post-Dispatch that he was inactive in the operation of the Centralia mine.

The subcommittee has announced that it expected to hear at Washington Secretary of the Interior J. A. Krug, who has general authority over coal mines under the continuing federal management. It also has said that John L. Lewis, head of the AFL United Mine Workers of America, could appear if he desired.

FOURTH OF MINES U.S. SHUT MAY BE 'SAFE' BY MONDAY

If All 518 Pits Stay Closed, 100,000 Men Would Be Idle and Coal Output Cut 26 Pct.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 4

WASHINGTON, April 4 (AP)—At least 25 per cent of the 518 bituminous mines closed by federal order as unsafe "are expected to be certified okay" before Monday—the end of a six-day mourning period by soft coal diggers—a Navy spokesman said today.

"We expect to certify some mines as safe late this afternoon and many more tomorrow," he said.

"Each company operating an unsafe mine received orders from Washington (from the office of Secretary of the Interior Krug) on what to do in their particular pits." When the operating manager of the mine and the United Mine Workers' safety committee declare the pit safe, the Navy immediately certifies it as such.

"We will know definitely late Saturday or Sunday the exact number of mines which will remain closed after the miners' six-day layoff."

John P. Busarello, president of UMW District 5 at Pittsburgh, ordered the union safety committees in his area not to sign any certificates as to mine safety without first submitting it to his office.

"We want to check on what's been done to improve the safety," Busarello explained. "We're doing this for the protection of our miners."

The Navy spokesman said, "I don't expect all of the 518 mines declared unsafe to be operating on Monday. Some of the corrections will be quite extensive and will take quite some time to repair adequately."

The Navy is operating the mines for the Government.

If all the unsafe mines in 19 states remained idle Monday, about one-fourth of the nation's 400,000 miners would remain away from the pits.

The Solid Fuels Administration said the shutdowns ordered by Secretary of the Interior Krug will cut production by 616,000 tons a day, a drop of about 26 per cent from the normal output.

Field reports indicated some uncertainty as to what the federal directive would mean in terms of its effect on industrial and civic activities. At Chicago, city officials conferred with coal suppliers on ways of increasing stockpiles at city water pumping stations. Although a 21-day stockpile was available, the 48 Illinois closings would result in a 50 per cent drop in the state's total production.

In two states, Krug's order drew a quick protest from coal operators.

Harry A. Sutter, vice president of the Western Pennsylvania Coal Operators' Association, asserted:

"The order came as a shock. There were no reasons given for any of the shutdowns. Pennsylvania laws are strict and well-enforced."

The Virginia Coal Operators' Association issued a statement through President George H. Esser of Norton, asserting operators of the state's 22 closed mines were "nonplussed with reference to what they were required to do to meet the standards which would permit them to reopen their mines."

Esser said the mines had complied with all federal mine department inspection recommendations.

The Ohio division of mines expressed disagreement with the federal order. Stephen Williams, chief of the division, describing Ohio's mines as among the nation's safest, asserted he thought the order was "uncalled for and unfair."

In the Pittsburgh district, three steel company-owned mines were among those deemed unsafe and ordered closed. They included one pit each of the United States Steel Corporation, Republic Steel Corporation and Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation.

A United States Steel spokesman said his firm was still studying possible effects of the shutdowns but said the action would affect only about 5 per cent of its "captive" pit operations.

In the current mourning shutdown, lack of coke for blast furnaces has caused some steel-making curtailment. The coke ovens are manned by members of the United Mine Workers.

Operators big Illinois mines ordered closed are working on safety provisions in an effort to obtain permission to reopen Monday, Fred Wilkey, secretary of the Illinois Coal Operators' Association, said at Chicago. The mine managements and local union safety committees were consulting the latest reports of state and federal mine inspectors and were taking whatever steps had been recommended to make the mines more safe, including rock dusting in some cases.

The Illinois Labor Department ruled today that Illinois miners were entitled to unemployment compensation, not only for the current six-day period of mourning, but for subsequent days "up to a point where their mines are held safe."

Samuel Bernstein, commissioner of placement and unemployment compensation for the department, announced his ruling at Chicago. He said that "if in subsequent weeks, beginning Monday, the mines are found to be safe by the examining committees, then the decision would no longer hold. The decision will hold up to a point where the mines are held safe."

The maximum unemployment compensation is $20 weekly for each miner, and Bernstein said most of the miners would get the maximum. Actually the miners would not receive pay for their first week of idleness because all persons applying for unemployment compensation must go through a "waiting period" of one week.

Centralia Left Alone With Grief And Memories as Inquiries Close

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 7

By HARRY WILENSKY
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 7—The State Legislators, the United States Senators, the federal mine inspectors and all other investigating officials were gone today and Centralia, scene of the disastrous mine explosion of March 25, was struggling back to normal.

After the saddest Easter in the history of this city, the 98 widows and 78 dependent children and other survivors set out today to rebuild their shattered lives. Children returned to school, and mothers called at the office of the Centralia Coal Co. Mine No. 5 to pick up the paycheck. The fatal explosion, which took 111 lives, occurred two days before the semi-monthly payday at the mine.

Centralia had its display of Easter finery yesterday, but the annual egg hunts and other festive events were canceled. There was a sprinkling of black which provided a somber contrast to the gay colors in the Easter parade. Many mourning families attended church services, but some were too grief-stricken to leave their homes.

At the Evangelical Lutheran Church, a memorial bulletin captioned, "At Rest," was distributed to the congregation. It outlined the lives of three members, John C. Busse, William Mentler and Daniel Saunders, who died in the blast-torn mine.

The widow of Henry Knicker and her four children went to Sunday school and prayer services at St. Peter's Evangelical Church "because he would have wanted us to go."

"Long, Lonesome Day."

Mrs. Louis Piazzi, who lost both her husband and her son, Julius, in the disaster stayed home all day. "The three girls had their Easter outfits all right, but none of us felt like going out," she explained. "It wasn't Easter to us. It was just a long and very lonesome day."

Mrs. Edith Carter, widow of Arthur H. Carter, track-layer at the mine, attended services at St. Mary's Church, although she is not a Catholic. "Art was planning to return to the Catholic Church on Easter Sunday, and I felt I should go to the services there, since he couldn't," she explained. "Our landlady, Mrs. H. R. Huddleston, who lives next door, lit candles for him and offered the prayer for repose of his soul."

Memorial services for the Centralia dead will be conducted by miners in Colorado, it was announced at St. Mary's yesterday.

$40,000 in Relief Fund.

A wave of contributions, started by a donation from St. Louis, has piled up $40,000 for needy survivors of the men killed in the mine disaster. A committee of miners, bankers and civic leaders met today to make plans for distribution of the still growing fund.

It was decided to spend the money to meet emergency and immediate needs, although some exceptions will be made through provisions for unborn children of the miners. Allocations will vary with needs of surviving families or individuals.

Financial help to defray funeral expenses of some of the 111 victims will be extended.

The relief fund resulted from a spontaneous movement set off by the action of the Hyde Park Brewing Co., which sent $2500 to Mayor O. W. Wright to aid survivors in need. "This started the whole thing, and in no time at all contributions began to pour in from all parts of the country," reported C. R. Bird, Centralia Finance Commissioner.

Donations have ranged from $1 sent in by a group of school children to $5000 contributed by Anheuser-Busch, Inc., of St. Louis. Griesedieck Bros. Brewery Co., gave $3000 and Falstaff Brewing Corp., $2500. Many donations have come from individual St. Louisans. Workers in other mines likewise have chipped in.

William E. Rowekamp, recording secretary of Local 52, United Mine Workers of America, and one of the 31 survivors of the March 25 explosion, is chairman of the committee in charge of the fund. The group includes four other miners, Ed Auberry, Hendrix Laughunn, Menzie Gregory and Settimo Pollacci; Henry Kohl, president of the Old National Bank; Ben Ober, president of the City National Bank, and Mayor Wright.

MEDILL'S OWN COMMITTEE HELD MINE WAS UNSAFE

Special Investigating Group Made Virtually Same Recommendations as Had Scanlan.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 3

By ROY J. HARRIS
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., April 3—Robert M. Medill, who resigned Tuesday as director of the State Department of Mines and Minerals, failed to close the Centralia Coal Co. Mine No. 5, where 111 miners lost their lives last week, despite the fact, discovered today by the Post-Dispatch, that reports by State Mine Inspector Driscoll Scanlan of unsafe conditions in the mine were substantiated by Medill's own special investigating commission.

Scanlan said he begged Medill to close the mine, predicting a dust explosion. Medill, instead, appointed the commission which reported its findings to the State Mining Board Jan. 2, 1946. These findings repeated virtually all of Scanlan's recommendations for safety measures posted at the mine near Centralia in December 1945.

By March 3, 1946, unsafe conditions had not been corrected and Local 52, United Mine Workers of America, representing workers in the mine, wrote a letter to Gov. Dwight H. Green of Illinois, pleading with him to "save our lives" by enforcing safety measures. Three of the four men who signed the letter were killed in the mine explosion last week.

Two of the recommendations by Scanlan, repeated by Medill's commission—one of them for all-important rock dusting to prevent spread of explosions—still had not been complied with when Scanlan posted his final warning, last March 19, six days before the fatal blast. The other recommendation was for removal of loose roof rock and adequate timbering on hauling roads.

Specific steps taken by the mine management to comply with other recommendations by Scanlan and the investigation commission have not been made public, pending preparation of a complete file of all reports relating to the Centralia mine. Scanlan's report of March 19, however, ended with this significant paragraph:

"Recommendations of previous investigations that have not been complied with should be complied with."

A copy of the investigating commission's report was released yesterday by Don Hyndman, administrative assistant to Gov. Dwight H. Green, after repeated requests by this correspondent at the office of the Department of Mines and Minerals.

Hyndman said the copy was being made public as evidence that the state had nothing to hide in connection with the mine disaster, but said release of follow-up reports and other correspondence would be up to the new mine director, Harold L. Walker, or the fact-finding board now in session at Centralia.

Robert Weir, assistant director of Mines and Minerals, had refused Tuesday to release the report, stating that he thought all the correspondence should be made public at the same time, on conclusion of the fact-finding board's investigation. Meanwhile, at Centralia, Weir's superior, Medill, promised to make public all pertinent correspondence, but an hour later Gov. Green announced Medill's resignation.

The special investigating commission, appointed by the Mining Board, had as members Weir, Ben H. Schull of Pinckneyville and Murrell Reak of West Frankfort, both members of the Mining Board, and John Golden of Du Quoin and Charles Blakeney of Westville, both state mine inspectors. Their inspection of the mine took place Dec. 28, 1945.

Their report, of about 300 words, bore out strikingly the findings of Scanlan in his more detailed reports. After mentioning poor ventilation, with "more than 100 men on one split of air," and the presence of loose rock along the haulage road, their observations continued:

"Other conditions: In some entries, rooms were turned ahead of the last open cross-cut. Generator room not entirely fireproof and insufficient fire extinguishers and no sand or rock dust. In some cases telephones were too far from working places. Timbering at face was generally good. The mine is not adequately rock dusted."

Safety Recommendations.

The committee's recommendations for safety measures almost identical in each case with Scanlan's recommendations, made three weeks earlier were:

"That not more than 100 men be on one split of air to comply with the general mining laws.

"A light be placed on front of each trip.

"All loose rock on haulage road be timbered or taken down.

"That rooms be turned according to law.

"Generator rooms be fireproof and sufficient quantity of rock dust or sand be kept near generator room to comply with the law.

"Telephones be installed to comply with the general mining law.

"Mine be adequately rock dusted.

"All examiners be equipped with electric cap lamp."

Schull and Reak have been members of the Mining Board, by appointment of the Governor, since 1941. Schull, named on recommendation of the Illinois Coal Operators' Association, formerly was vice president in charge of operations for the Binkley Coal Corp. at Pinckneyville, but he has been company consultant.

Reak, a miner employed at Orient No. 2, of the Chicago, Wilmington & Franklin Coal Co., was recommended for the board by the United Mine Workers of America. Golden and Blakeney were coal miners before appointment as mine inspectors in 1941.

Weir has been assistant director since 1942, when he was promoted from the job of mine inspector. Before that he was employed for 20 years by the Bell and Zoller interests, owners of the Centralia Mine.

TWO BELL & ZOLLER CO. MINES AMONG 48 ORDERED CLOSED BY KRUG IN ILLINOIS

By a Washington Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

WASHINGTON, April 3.

AMONG the 518 coal mines closed by Secretary of the Interior J. A. Krug today are Zeigler No. 1 and Zeigler No. 2 of the Bell & Zoller Illinois group affiliated with the Centralia mine, scene of last week's disaster. These are in Franklin county, Ill., operated by the Bell & Zoller Coal Mining Co.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 3

MINERS REFUSE TO WORK TILL U.S. DECLARES PITS SAFE

GOV. GREEN'S AID WARNED MEDILL ON MINERS' PLEA

Said Governor Might Be Subject to Severe Criticism If Accident Occurred in Pit.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 4

By ROY J. HARRIS
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., April 4—John William Chapman, secretary to Gov. Dwight H. Green of Illinois, was so impressed by the "save our lives" letter written to the Governor 13 months ago by miners at Centralia Coal Co. Mine No. 5 that he made this comment in forwarding the letter for action to Robert M. Medill, then director of the Department of Mines and Minerals:

"It is my opinion that the Governor may be subject to very severe criticism in the event that the facts complained of are true and that as a result of this condition some serious accident occurs at the mine."

The "facts complained of" continued to be true, at least in substantial part, with the result that an explosion swept the mine a week ago Tuesday, killing 111 miners. Medill resigned last Tuesday, under fire, and investigations are under way to determine responsibility for the disaster.

Complaints Belittled.

After Medill's reply to Chapman was received, however, belittling the miners' complaints as exaggerated, Chapman put the correspondence in the files, and he told the Post-Dispatch he could not recall whether he had ever taken up the matter with Gov. Green. The Governor has said his attention was not called to the letter or the complaint before the disaster.

In stating his inability to remember whether he had done any more than file the correspondence, Chapman remarked that "Medill was on top of the matter" and that a prior investigation had been made, as reported to him by Medill.

There was an eight-day lag between the date of the letter written by four officers of Local No. 52, United Mine Workers of America, and forwarding of the letter by Chapman to Medill. A copy of Chapman's letter was obtained by the Post-Dispatch today. The correspondent asked Chapman to explain the delay in acting on the miners' urgent communication to the Governor, which was marked "personal."

Chapman's Explanation.

Chapman said Gov. Green was out of the state from Feb. 25 to March 16, 1946, on a vacation at Stuart, Fla. Some time in this interval Chapman was away for a few days, visiting West Palm Beach, Fla., he went on. He said he was unable to recall the exact dates when he was away, hence could not say whether the miners' letter had been held up on his desk.

Today the Governor's office found the original of the miners' letter and informed the correspondent that the routine time stamp on it showed it had reached that office March 9. The letter itself was dated March 3. Chapman's letter to Medill was dated March 11. The miners' appealing letter was published in the Post-Dispatch two days after the explosion, in which three of the four union officers who signed it were killed.

"I have a very distinct recollection of the miners' letter," Chapman told the correspondent. "It impressed me as very important. That's why I wrote the kind of letter I did to Mr. Medill."

The correspondent asked him why he did not telephone Gov. Green about the matter, since he regarded it as so important.

"We receive a great volume of mail," Chapman answered. "This was a departmental matter and I felt there was nothing the Governor in Florida could do about it that couldn't be done as well by my sending it to the department. Under our practice, a letter sent by the Governor's secretary to a department director, who knows the matter later will be called to the attention of the Governor, has the same effect as if the Governor himself had sent it. Furthermore, in view of the importance of the letter, I'm sure I acted within 24 hours after I saw it."

Questions for Governor.

Gov. Green, since his return to Springfield from Centralia Tuesday night, has refused to grant interviews to reporters. He consented, however, through his administrative assistant, Don Hyndman, to answer written questions. The Post-Dispatch correspondent then asked by this method: "Why was the miners' letter sent to the mines department without the Governor first seeing or learning of it and giving his personal instructions to the director?"

The Governor's typewritten reply was: "Because the letter involved a matter under the jurisdiction of the Mines and Minerals Department it was referred at once to the department by Mr. Chapman, with a request it be fully and carefully investigated."

Chapman's letter of transmittal to Medill concluded with this request: "Will you kindly have this complaint carefully investigated so I can call the report of the investigation to the Governor's attention at the time I show him this letter?"

Medill's Comment.

Medill, in a memorandum to Chapman two days later, said:

"The complaint sounds a good deal worse than it really is. The present condition at the mine is not any different than it has been during the past 10 or 15 years. In fact, in spite of war conditions, the management has made a great number of improvements."

He referred in his memorandum to a safety inspection of the mine, conducted Dec. 28, 1945, by a special investigation committee, following severe criticism of the mine management by State Mine Inspector Driscoll Scanlan and the union, and of the finding by the State Mining Board that "there is insufficient evidence to revoke the certificate of competency of Norman Prudent, superintendent, and William H. Brown, mine manager."

"While there were some conditions in the mine which should have been corrected, and which are being corrected at the present time," Medill's memorandum continued, "it was because of wartime conditions, shortage of help, and the Government demanding every ton of coal that could be produced, that it was not possible to keep the mine in as good condition as it would have been during normal times."

Contradiction in Letter.

The next paragraph contained the rather contradictory statement that "the present condition at the mine is not any different than it has been during the past 10 or 15 years."

The negligible extent to which conditions were "being corrected" in 1946 was poignantly illustrated by Scanlan's final inspection report, posted at the mine March 19, six days before the blast, in which he recommended as follows:

"That the ventilation be increased at places reported as inadequate.

"That the dirty haulage roads be cleaned and sprinkled. The loose roof on the haulage roads be taken down or securely timbered.

"The hoist in the underground machine shop be put in safe condition. The mine be adequately rock dusted.

"Recommendations of previous inspections that have not been complied with should be complied with."

Recommendations in 1945.

Two of these recommendations—for rock dusting (to prevent spread of explosions) and for removal of loose roof and adequate timbering—had been made by Scanlan in December 1945, and substantiated by the investigation committee later that month, along with several other recommendations.

Scanlan has said he pleaded with Medill to close the mine, predicting a dust explosion. Medill has denied Scanlan made such a plea and insisted that Scanlan himself had authority to close the mine. Medill told this correspondent, however, that it always had been department policy for inspectors to obtain Medill's approval before closing a mine. He could recall no case in which an inspector had closed a mine without first obtaining Medill's approval.

Asked About Campaign Gifts.

Another written question submitted to Gov. Green by the correspondent was based on charges by Scanlan that Medill was more interested in collecting political campaign contributions from mine owners than in enforcing mine safety rules, and that the Governor was "satisfied" with the collection efforts. The question was: "What instructions did the Governor give, and to whom, in connection with collection of campaign funds from mine owners?"

Green's typewritten reply was: "I did not give any instructions to anyone in the collection of any political funds from mine owners. I did not authorize any such solicitations. If any were made, it was without my knowledge or consent and contrary to my established policy."

As published in the Post-Dispatch March 19, it was found that a virtual "shakedown" of Illinois coal mine operators was conducted by Medill's department to raise funds for the Republican mayoral campaign in Chicago. The Democrats carried Chicago in last Tuesday's election. It was learned that the mine contributions were voluntary in theory but were "suggested" by Medill's mine inspectors, who had power to close the mines on safety charges. Scanlan had refused to help make the collections.

Another question submitted to Green was: "To what extent did the Governor dictate to Medill the policy of the Department of Mines and Minerals?" The typewritten answer was:

"At no time have I ever sought to dictate the policies of the Mines and Minerals Department. Mr. Medill was appointed in the first instance with the indorsement of both the miners' union and both of the operators' associations in Illinois. I have never endeavored to interfere with or dictate the operations of the department."

WILLIAM GREEN CALLS FOR PUNISHMENT OF THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR BLAST

WASHINGTON, April 1 (INS).

AFL President William Green declared last night he hopes that "those found responsible will be properly punished" for the Illinois coal mine disaster in which 111 men lost their lives. Green telegraphed Ed Auberry, secretary of the United Mine Workers local where the disaster occurred:

"The 7.5 million members of the AFL and all their friends are deeply moved by the sudden death of more than 100 miners who were the victims of the terrific mine explosion which occurred at Centralia.

"We hope a thorough investigation will disclose who, because of negligence or otherwise, were responsible for the appalling tragedy which shook the nation and that those found responsible will be properly punished."

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 1

48 ILLINOIS MINES AMONG THE 518 CLOSED BY KRUG

About 15,000 Men Will Be Made Idle—Half of State's Shipping Tonnage From These Pits.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 3

By a Washington Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

WASHINGTON, April 3—Of the 518 soft-coal mines ordered closed today by Secretary of the Interior Krug, 48 were listed in Illinois.

The order will throw 15,000 members of the United Mine Workers out of work while the mines are closed, it was estimated in Chicago by Fred Wilkey, secretary of the Illinois Coal Operators' Association. This is three-fourths of the UMW Illinois membership of nearly 20,000.

At least one-half of the shipping mine tonnage of the state is produced by the 48 mines, production records of the operators' association indicate. Thirty-one of the state's biggest shipping mines are affected, including most of those in the big Franklin county area. In 1945, the last year for which records are abailable, the 48 closed mines produced an estimated 36,500,000 tons of the state's product of 70,322,000 tons.

Krug's order was conveyed to the operating managers of the mines by telegrams. The names of those notified, with the names of the mines and operating companies, follow:

Sig Schrader, Crain mine, Crain Coal Co., Percy; George E. Smith, O'Kay mine, Smith Coal Co., Marissa; John Waligorski, Kuhn mine, Bois Coal Co., Dubois; Bert Jolliff, Glenridge mine, Marion County Coal Mining Co., Centralia; Hector Beveridge, Beveridge No. 2 mine, Beveridge Coal Co., Sparta; G. A. Lemon, Lemon mine, Lemon-McKelvey Coal Co., Sparta; J. D. Moffat, Moffat No. 2 mine, Moffat Coal Co., Sparta; W. P. Hill, Orchard mine, Blue Hill Coal Co., Marion.

W. J. Jenkins, Lake Creek Mine, Consolidated Coal Co., Railway Exchange Building, St. Louis, Mo.; J. Roy Browning, Freeman mine, Freeman Coal Mining Corp., Chicago; L. C. Boatright, Moren mine, Moren Coal Co., Marion; D. W. Buchanan, No. 15 mine, Old Ben Coal Corp., Chicago; W. P. Young, operating manager, Zeigler No. 2 mine, Bell & Zoller Coal & Mining Co., Chicago; W. P. Young, Zeigler No. 1 mine, Bell & Zoller Coal and Mining Co.; George B. Harrington, New Orient No. 1 mine, Wilmington & Franklin Coal Co., Chicago; George B. Harrington, New Orient mine, Wilmington & Franklin Coal Co.

Andy Pugh, New Wilson mine, Cutler Coal Co., Inc., Cutler; S. Peabody, No. 14 mine, Peabody Coal Co., Chicago; Leroy Farrow, Hilltop mine, Middle Road Coal Co., Peoria; James Hope, Crescent No. 1 mine, Rock Island Improvement Co., Chicago; W. L. Harris, Pekin mine, Pekin Coal Mining Co., Pekin; S. Peabody, No. 7 mine, Peabody Coal Co., Chicago; S. Peabody, No. 9 mine, Peabody Coal Co.; S. Peabody, 58 mine, Peabody Coal Co.

John Bontjes Jr., mine "B", Citizens Mining and Sales Co., Peoria; Bryan Eddie, Eddy mine, Eddy Coal Co., Cantrall; S. Peabody, No. 59 mine, Peabody Coal Co.; S. Peabody No. 57 mine, Peabody Coal Co., Chicago; C. W. Thomas, Blue Lake mine, Blue Lake Coal Co., Catlin; Romeo Zamberletti, Oakwood mine, Oakwood Coal Co., Oakwood; Harry N. Moses, Bunsenville mine, United States Coal and Coke Co., Pittsburgh, Pa.

A. J. Fourtuna, Edgar mine, Edgar County Coal Co., Paris, Ill.; E. R. Keeler, Royalton No. 7 mine, Franklin County Coal Corp., Chicago; E. R. Keeler, Energy No. 5 mine, Franklin County Coal Corp., Chicago; D. W. Buchanan, No. 8 mine, Old Ben Coal Corp., Chicago; D. W. Buchanan, No. 11 mine, Old Ben Coal Corp., Chicago; D. W. Buchanan, No. 9 mine, Old Ben Coal Corp.; D. W. Buchanan, No. 14 mine, Old Ben Coal Corp.; S. Peabody, No. 18 mine, Peabody Coal Co.; T. J. Thomas, Valier mine, Valier Coal Co., Chicago.

A. H. Truax, Burning Star mine, Truax-Traer Coal Co., Chicago; W. J. Jenkins, Jefferson No. 20 mine, Consolidated Coal Co., Railway Exchange Bldg., St. Louis; B. DeFilippe, No. 3 mine, Spring Valley Coal Mining Co., Spring Valley,. Ill.; F. B. Nieman, East mine, Citizens Coal Co., Breese, Ill.; George A. Wallace, Wallace coal mine, Wallace Coal Co., Marion; Carl Bowman, Knoxville mine, Knoxville Mining Co., Knoxville; A. R. Pschirrer, Kildee No. 3 mine, Pschirrer and Sons Coal Co., Canton; J. W. McAfee, New Kathleen mine, Union Colliery Co., St. Louis.

Only one telegram was listed as going to a Missouri operating manager, George Coville Jr., of Kansas City, of the Jewel Mining Co.'s Jewel mine. There was no indication whether this mine was in Missouri, Illinois or Kansas.

Head of Firm Tells of Getting U. S. Safety Orders.

W. J. Jenkins, president of Consolidated Coal Co., with offices in the Railway Exchange Building, said he had received federal notification that certain safety measures should be taken at the two mines ordered closed but that the report stated no "imminently hazardous conditions prevailed. The Lake Creek Mine, in Williamson county, employs 225 men. The other mine ordered closed, the Nason mine, in Jefferson county, employs 335 miners. All are members of the United Mine Workers. The company operates also two mines in Macoupin county, manned by crews of the Progressive Mine Workers. They have not been closed.

Scene in a Centralia cemetery, with open graves awaiting victims of the tragedy, the nation's worst mine disaster in 23 years.
—Associated Press Wirephoto.

DEATH BENEFIT OF $1000 TO EACH UMW FAMILY

First Use of Welfare Fund — Payments to Families of Centralia (Ill.) Mine Victims.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 9

By JOSEPH HANLON
A Washington Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

WASHINGTON, April 9—Trustees of the welfare fund for bituminous mine workers decided today the first use to which they will put it will be payment of $1000 death benefits to families of all miners covered by its terms. Next they will consider on an individual basis instances of hardship in families of miners who have died or been disabled by injury.

Asked by the Post-Dispatch if any special consideration would be given to relief for the survivors of the Centralia mine explosion, the chairman of the trustees, Thomas E. Murray of New York, said they would be considered along with other distress cases, all on the basis of individual needs and all within the resources of the fund.

The death benefits were made retroactive to June 1 and thus will go to the families of the 111 men killed at Centralia.

The trustees will meet again in Washington next Tuesday, Murray said, to consider further plans for use of the fund, accumulated through a royalty of five cents a ton on all coal produced. The fund now stands at about $18,000,000 and will be about $25,000,000 when the Krug-Lewis agreement which created it expires next June 30.

In Nature of Insurance.

"We will take on other obligations as we see whether we can meet them," Murray said. The $1000 death benefits to survivors of miners he described as in the nature of an insurance policy, to be paid whatever may have been the cause of death. These payments are to be retroactive to the time the fund was set up, last June 1.

Asked by this reporter if, in contemplating "other obligations" which might call for payments from the fund, the trustees had in mind that the present fund expires with the Krug-Lewis agreement and the possibility that $25,000,000 might be all that is available, Murray said: "We are thinking in terms of the $18,000,000 we have."

But John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers, and one of the trustees, amplified the reply.

"Let me put your mind at ease on that point," he boomed. "The United Mine Workers have no intention of signing any contract with the operators that does not contain provisions for a welfare fund.

"And it is obvious—I think the other trustees will agree with me—that present revenue of the fund is not sufficient to carry out all the obligations originally contemplated by the fund."

The other trustees, Navy Capt. N. H. Collisson as Coal Mines Administrator under Government seizure of the mines, and Murray, who is 55 years old, did not dispute Lewis on this point.

The "Other Obligations."

That brought up the question of what were the "other obligations" and how much money would be needed to meet them. Lewis recited a six-point program of "obligations" and said they could be met only through a 10-cent a ton royalty on coal produced—twice the present payment.

First was medical service to coal miners and their families. Second was hospitalization. Then came life and health insurance and rehabilitation of miners injured in accidents at work.

Fifth was relief in hardship cases where miners receive inadequate compensation for injuries.

Murray and the other trustees agreed that death benefits to families of miners would require about $6,700,000 a year, based on the $1000 payment and the annual death rate of 16.8 miners per 1000 in the 400,000 members of the UMWA.

INQUEST VERDICT OF ACCIDENT IN CENTRALIA BLAST

Coroner's Jury Reports on Findings in Disaster—Uncertainty About Reopening Mine.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 9

By a Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 9—A verdict of accident has been returned by a Washington county coroner's jury in the Centralia Coal Co. Mine No. 5 disaster in which 111 miners were killed March 25, it was announced today.

Dr. George Green, coroner, previously had announced the inquest would be perfunctory, leaving it to other agencies to investigate the tragedy. The jury heard only three witnesses, William Rowekamp, recording secretary of the local United Mine Workers union at the mine; Fred Hellmeyer, chief electrician, and H. C. Niermann, mine superintendent.

Following announcement of the verdict, Dr. Green said he was "not finished with the case," but declined to elaborate. He said death certificates had been signed for all 111 men. Earlier it had been reported there was a delay in signing the certificates.

Charles Hodges, mayor of Wamac, Ill., site of Mine No. 5 shaft, served as foreman of the jury. Hodges announced the jury's verdict. He said the inquest was completed last night.

Meanwhile, William P. Young, vice president and operating head of the Centralia Coal Co., said it was uncertain when the mine would be reopened, if ever. "We still can't say whether we'll be able to reopen the mine," he declared. "We looked at parts of it today. We still have much territory to cover."

'DEAR BILL' AND 'DEAR BOB' LETTERS ON SAFETY READ, 'BUDDIES,' MINER REMARKS

By a Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 4

ROBERT M. MEDILL, who resigned under fire as director of the Illinois State Department of Mines and Minerals, was "Bob," and William P. Young, operating head of the Centralia Coal Co., was "Bill," in an exchange of letters read yesterday at the Senate hearing.

"Dear Bill," began the letter from Medill to Young, dated Feb. 28, 1945, "I am enclosing the report of Driscoll Scanlan and would appreciate your letting me have any comment you care to make." The report, by State Mine Inspector Scanlan, told of safety hazards in the mine.

"Dear Bob," Young's reply began, "As you know, we have working under a severe handicap. . . ." The letter concluded with the hope that it would be possible, before long, to give attention to safety recommendations.

While the "Dear Bill" and "Dear Bob" correspondence was being read, a miner in the audience spat and muttered: "Buddies."

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 4

KRUG ASKS STATES TO END HAZARDS IN 162 MINES

Calls on 15 Governors to Correct Conditions in Pits Not Under United States Control.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 7

WASHINGTON, April 7 (AP)—Secretary of the Interior Krug called on the Governors of 15 states yesterday to "correct dangerous conditions" in 162 soft-coal mines which are out of the Government's reach.

Referring to his own action in closing 518 of the 2531 mines operating under Government seizure, Krug wrote that he had taken steps, where he had the authority, "to correct outstanding dangerous conditions." The workings are to remain closed until certified safe.

Krug told the Governors that the Centralia (Ill.) disaster, with its 111 dead, "emphasizes the hazards of coal mining and the need of greater efforts to prevent mine accidents."

The Government, he pointed out, has no authority to direct correction of unsafe conditions in mines not under federal management. He offered the Governors any assistance his department can give, however.

Appended to the letter was the list of 162 mines, by states, and explosion hazards in them reported by Bureau of Mines inspectors.

The list showed 77 mines in Illinois, 19 in Ohio, 16 in Pennsylvania, 16 in West Virginia, eight in Kentucky, six in Indiana, four in Alabama, four in Oklahoma, three in Virginia, two each in Colorado, Tennessee and Montana, and one each in Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

In general, the mines are non-union workings or are manned by members of the Progressive Miners' Union and were not affected by last year's United Mine Workers' strike. Only struck properties were seized by the Government.

In Springfield, Ill., a spokesman for Gov. Dwight H. Green said the Krug letter had not been received by the Governor. However, he pointed out that Gov. Green on March 29 had ordered closing of any mines in the state not cleared by a new inspection.

The Governor's March 29 order directing "a resurvey of all of the coal mines in Illinois to determine if any of them are violating safety regulations" was addressed to Robert M. Medill, then state director of mines. After Medill resigned the post, the directive was repeated to Harold L. Walker, Medill's successor.

The spokesman said no report had been made to the Governor as yet as to action taken under the directive.

Business Boom in Centralia Follows Disaster at Mine

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 5

By a Staff Correspondent of Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 5—Far from paralyzing business here in the pre-Easter season, the mine disaster actually stimulated business activity.

With characteristic pride, families of the 111 men killed in the explosion were determined to attend the funerals in "Sunday clothes," and store sales boomed.

"In some cases where survivors were not prepared for the whole family to go out at once, the American Red Cross arranged with merchants to outfit those in need so they would not be embarrassed," a spokesman for the home service department stated.

Clothing for children as well as adults was in great demand, and some stores reported stocks of certain lines were virtually exhausted.

Cleaning and pressing establishments likewise did an unprecedented business, remaining open, at the request of city officials, for half a day on the "day of mourning" last Monday.

The influx of mine rescue workers, investigating officials, reporters, photographers and radio broadcasting crews jammed hotels and taxed restaurants.

SHUTDOWN BACKS LEWIS DEMAND TO INSPECT SHAFTS BEFORE OPENING

Men Willing to Do Clean-up Tasks, Remove Hazards but Will Not Produce Coal — Industry Facing Cut-back.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 7

By a Washington Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

WASHINGTON, April 7—Most of the nation's bituminous coal miners refused to return to work today, backing up a demand by John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers of America, that the mines remain closed until they are re-inspected by the Bureau of Mines and certified as safe.

Lewis's demand that the Government keep the mines closed was rejected by Secretary of the Interior Krug. However, as the six-day stoppage, in mourning for the 111 miners who died in the Centralia (Ill.) disaster, ended last midnight miners began what amounted to a "safety strike."

In many mines, including those in Illinois, union members were available for maintenance work. They were willing to work cleaning up coal dust or spreading rock dust, to reduce the danger of other dust explosions such as the one which occurred at the Centralia Coal Co.'s Mine No. 5. They would not, however, resume production of coal in most mines under UMW contract.

There are 2531 mines in Government possession. Of these, 518 previously had been ordered closed as unsafe, by Secretary Krug.

In addition, the Secretary of the Interior advised Governors of 15 states that federal inspectors had found dangerous conditions in 162 mines not operated under UMW contracts and hence not under Government seizure, which followed a UMW strike.

Meanwhile the solid backing of Lewis's safety demands by 400,000 United Mine Workers members caused another 5 per cent cut in United States Steel Corp. blast furnace operations in the Pittsburgh area, to 80 per cent of normal. A 15 per cent cut had been

Republic Steel shut down a blast furnace at Birmingham, Ala., because of the coal shortage.

ordered as a result of the "memorial" work stoppage.

The Pennsylvania Railroad today furloughed 1500 train crewmen on its Pittsburgh division and said additional furloughs were expected. The division's movement of coal cars dropped from 26,000 a week to an anticipated 4000. Coal production in the Pittsburgh area was reported to be less than 20 per cent of normal.

Government officials today were studying the Krug-Lewis agreement and the terms of the contempt of court convictions against Lewis and the UMW for striking late last year, in an effort to determine their future course of action. Because Lewis called off a strike set for April 1, the $3,500,000 fine against the union was reduced to $700,000.

The present stoppage in effect achieves the same end that Lewis was forced to abandon by court action. Whether further court action was indicated was in doubt today.

The Solid Fuels Administration estimated that there were 50,000,000 tons of coal in consumers' stockpiles as of March 1, and that production had reached 12,150,000 tons a week before the "memorial" stoppage April 1. This stock pile was sufficient to carry most industries over the six-day period, but it was estimated that a continued stoppage soon would begin to cripple other industries, as well as steel, the great coal consumer.

Although faced with this serious blow to industry on the one hand, the Government was faced with the possibility, on the other, that any forced reopening of mines, even if possible, might be followed by a new mine disaster. Mine deaths average about three per working day, "normally."

As Government officials struggled with this dilemma, the mine work stoppage over the nation appeared to be fairly complete, although following no set pattern.

Illinois—About 17,000 of 20,000 UMW members were idle today. Only maintenance crews reported for work. Hugh White, state union president, said other workers would be provided for safety work.

Nearly 11,000 Progressive Mine Workers continued in the pits, however, and the Coal Mines Administration announced that an operators' and employes' safety committee had approved one UMW mine previously closed by Krug's order. That mine was the Spring Valley Coal Co. Mine No. 3 at Spring Valley.

Some slope and strip mines were reported to be working in Illinois. Officials of the Peabody Co. Majestic mine near Du Quoin said this mine had been approved by a labor-management safety committee, but 550 union workers still refused to work.

FINDINGS BY U.S., GOV. GREEN'S BOARD IN DISASTER INQUIRY

EXPLOSION LAID TO DUST AND 'DANGEROUS' BLASTING METHOD IN FEDERAL REPORT

Need Is Shown for Redrafting of Safety Codes, Bureau of Mines Investigators Assert—No Effort by U.S. Agents to Fix Responsibility.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 16

By GEORGE H. HALL
A Washington Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

WASHINGTON, April 16.

THE explosion that killed 111 men in the Centralia (Ill.) Coal Co.'s Mine No. 5, March 25, "was caused by coal dust raised into the air and ignited by explosives fired in a dangerous and non-permissible manner."

Sixty-five of the men were killed by burns and violence and 46 by afterdamp, or carbon monoxide.

These were the conclusions reached by a team of five Bureau of Mines experts in a report made public yesterday. The group conducted an independent investigation at the mine April 2-6.

No effort was made to fix responsibility, as was done by the fact-finding commission appointed by Gov. Dwight H. Green of Illinois. This commission charged the mine operators, the State Department of Mines and Minerals and State Inspector Driscoll Scanlan were responsible.

Blasting Practice Criticized.

M. J. Ankeny, one of the Bureau of Mines inspectors who visited the Centralia mine earlier this month, presented the report at today's session of the Senate Subcommittee on Public Lands, headed by Senator Guy Cordon (Rep.), Oregon. The subcommittee has held hearings in Centralia and in Washington.

Elaborating on some of its principal points, Ankeny criticized the non-permissible practice of tamping dyhamite in drilled holes with bags of coal dust instead of with an inert material, such as clay.

"Why would a driller use coal dust if he knows this practice might endanger himself and his fellows?" Cordon asked.

"He doesn't know the hazards," Ankeny replied. "He doesn't know how dangerous it is."

In reply to another question, Ankeny said it was the duty of the mine operators to provide proper tamping material and that this was provided at least in some sections of the mine. The post-explosion examination showed holes in the same area were tamped with clay and with coal dust.

"Of course," said Ankeny, with a trace of a smile, "it is much easier merely to tamp the holes with coal dust than to walk back to the clay box for clay.

"The shift boss should have known this practice was going on, but perhaps he didn't understand the danger either."

Bureau Head's Report.

Dr. R. R. Sayers, director of the Bureau of Mines, presented his report to the committee. In it he supported the position taken by the Bureau of Mines inspector who examined the Centralia pit last November and last March, found numerous violations of the federal safety code and recommended precautions.

Sayers said that of the 518 mines closed recently by Secretary of the Interior J. A. Krug for safety violations, 277 had been re-examined by federal inspectors, and presumably had re-opened. They were closed for explosion hazards, he said, and had used rock dust extensively to minimize this danger.

The latest report of the investigators stated that "the mine was dry and accumulations of coal dust were permitted in working places and haulage roads, which resulted in the explosion being extended throughout four working sections. Very little effort had been made to load out excessive quantities of dust and watering methods had not been employed to allay the dust at its source."

The investigators added, however, that rock dust, "which cuts down explosion hazards," had been applied to the roof, ribs and roads of active haulage entries, but rock-dusting was not maintained close enough to working faces and was not applied to rooms.

The report stated that "unquestionably the presence of rock dust in entries, even though somewhat deficient in quantity, was the most important factor in preventing the spread of this explosion throughout the mine and to the shaft bottom. The flame died away rapidly on reaching rock-dusted zones in entries and probably saved the lives of the 31 men who escaped."

The consensus of the group was that 27 of those who were killed might have saved themselves had they retreated to the innermost point of the section in which they were caught and erected barricades. The inspectors found what the miners themselves probably did not know, that doors and stoppings damaged by the explosion on one end of this section permitted poisonous air to be short-circuited away. Sixteen others might have lived if they had remained in their section or had miner's self-rescuers.

Hazardous Practice.

Although the mine used permissible explosives, the inspectors reported boreholes containing the explosives were stemmed with combustible coal dust and fired with fuse and blasting caps ignited from the open flame of a carbide lamp. Electric detonators had been recommended for this mine.

"Permissible explosives will not produce dust explosions often," the report said, "even if fired in the hazardous manner and under the hazardous dust conditions described here. But when such hazardous practices and conditions are continued over a long period of time, the right combination of circumstances, such as a blown-out or open shot and an ignitable dust cloud in the presence of such shot, will likely precipitate an explosion sooner or later."

The mine was classified as "gassy" but there was no evidence to indicate methane gas was involved.

Lessons to Be Learned.

The "lessons to be learned" from the explosion were summarized as follows:

1. Mines which liberate little or no methane are not immune from widespread and tragic explosions if a dry and dusty condition exists and adequate measures are not taken to control the dust hazard.

2. The explosion has forcefully demonstrated the need to re-evaluate the dust explosion hazard. Up to the present time, it has not been customary for the coal mining industry, the Federal Bureau of Mines, state departments of mines, or any other group conversant with mine safety matters to regard dry and dusty conditions in mines as constituting an imminent danger of such magnitude as to warrant withdrawal of men, particularly if the mine does not liberate methane. If explosions of this type are to be prevented, it will be necessary to regard dry and dusty conditions in mines as being imminently dangerous in the future, and to withdraw the men from the mine or portion thereof where such dangerous conditions exist, until appropriate measures have been taken to remedy such conditions.

3. The partial rock-dusting of mines as a remedy for the coal dust explosion hazard leads to a false sense of security. In this instance, the application of rock-dust on haulage entries did not prevent the explosion from propagating from room to room through crosscuts. A study of the conditions revealed that this explosion propagated throughout four sections of the mine by traveling mainly through rooms, and dying away as it reached the rock-dusted haulage roads. The spread of dust explosions from one working place to another will be prevented by means of rock-dusting only when rock-dust is applied to all working places up to and including the last open crosscuts.

4. Permissible explosives, charged and fired in a permissible manner, are safe explosives. Permissible explosives stemmed with coal dust and fired with fuse and blasting caps in dependent sequence are dangerous. The maximum safety will be obtained, however, when all shots are fired while all men except shot firers are out of the mine.

5. Evidence obtained during the recovery operations showed without doubt that the men working at the farthest part of the mine from the section in which the explosion originated had an excellent opportunity of protecting themselves from afterdamp if they had had any knowledge whatever of barricading.

The inspectors made 18 recommendations for the removal of hazardous conditions related to the use of explosives. These recommendations were embodied in the two previous federal reports on the Centralia mine.

The report stated again that while permissible electric cap lamps were used by mine examiners, virtually all others used non-permissible open flame lamps, and added "smoking was permitted and practiced freely underground." It had been recommended that smoking be prohibited.

"All mining machines," the report said, "including loading machines, drills, shuttle cars and cable-reel locomotives were of the non-permissible type and received their power through trailing cables." The coal was undercut, drilled and loaded with non-permissible machinery.

It was noted that the March 25 blast was the fourth fatal explosion that has occurred at the Centralia mine. Four men were killed in 1909, one in 1915 and three in 1921. These explosions were reported to have resulted from blown-out shots while blasting.

The 47-page report included diagrams of the mine, lists of the dead and the locations where the bodies were found, lists of damage and where it was caused, analyses of dust samples, a description of the mine, and a chronological account of rescue operations.

Mine Blast Fact-Finding Board

—By a Post-Dispatch Staff Photographer.

Gov. Dwight H. Green's fact-finding committee which after a 10-day investigation has filed a report on the Centralia mine disaster. From left: OLIVER BISHOP, United Mine Workers representative; DAVID H. DEVONALD, vice president of the Peabody Coal Co., mine operators' representative; JAMES SNEDDON, inspector with the State Department of Mines and Minerals; JOHN E. CASSIDY, committee chairman; WILBERT J. HOHLT, State's Attorney of Washington county; WILLIAM GALLAGHER, engineer with the United States Bureau of Mines, and JOHN E. JONES, adviser to the Federal Coal Mines Administrator.

G.O.P. LEGISLATORS ARE ACCUSED OF TRYING TO 'SHIELD WRONGFUL ACTS'

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 25

By EVARTS GRAHAM JR.
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CENTRALIA, Ill., April 25 — The Illinois legislative committee investigating the Centralia mine disaster continued its hearings today despite the absence of the four Democratic members who had walked out, charging the committee under its Republican control was attempting a "political whitewash" to shield the State Department of Mines and Minerals.

The minority members withdrew in the course of a stormy session yesterday afternoon, after the six Republican members had blocked questioning designed to show a possible connection between lax enforcement of safety regulations and collection of Republican campaign contributions by the Department of Mines.

Representative Paul Powell, Vienna, House minority leader, told the Post-Dispatch the Democrats would not return to the hearings until they were permitted to question freely Robert M. Medill, resigned head of the Mines Department; Gov. Dwight H. Green and officers of the Bell & Zoller Coal and Mining Co. He also insisted on the right to subpena records of the operating firm.

Powell, speaking for the minority members, said, "We will return to Springfield, caucus and then submit a minority report."

Question on "Lug" Blocked.

At the morning session, Representative Carl Preihs (Dem.), Pana, started to ask William H. Brown, mine manager, whether the witness ever had been asked to contribute to the Chicago campaign.

Senator Logan D. Giffin (Rep.), Springfield, objected on the ground that the question was irrelevant. He was sustained by the chairman, Senator Merritt J. Little (Rep.), Aurora. Powell called for a roll call vote. On strictly party lines, the chairman was sustained six to four.

The hearing was interrupted while the Democrats held a caucus.

"We decided," Powell told a reporter, "to try once more when State Mine Inspector Driscoll Scanlan testified. If the question was ruled out of order again, we decided to withdraw from the committee."

After several hours of testimony by Scanlan in the afternoon repeating much of what he had previously told other investigating bodies, Preihs suddenly interjected a question about the meeting in Springfield last January at which Medill told Inspectors to solicit contributions.

Giffin asked Preihs, "Is this political?"

Preihs repeated his question, and Scanlan replied, "Nothing but politics was discussed."

Giffin, on his feet, objected again, and Little sustained him.

Preihs then began the wave of departures by announcing: "This committee has taken this attitude of an attempted whitewash of political affiliations which I regard as partly if not in whole the cause of the laxity in the enforcement of mine safety regulations.

"This committee has been thwarted by the chairman and the Republican members in its attempt to shed light on the necessity of a bill doing away with the position of director, creating a non-political commission and placing inspectors under civil service.

"In view of the attitude of the chairman and the Republican members, it is apparent that they were attempting to shield wrongful actions of the department."

He picked up his hat and coat and left the room in the Centralia City Hall where the hearing was being conducted. The handful of spectators applauded.

Before Powell could get to his feet, Representative William Robison (Rep.), Carlinville, announced, "I'm down here for one reason. I don't give a damn if they all leave this commission. I'm going to stay down here to help correct our laws."

Others Walk Out.

As Robison sat down, Powell rose.

"If we are going to be shut off here from questioning and finding out, we all may as well leave," he said. "We should be permitted to find out if politics played a part in this disaster so we can make laws to correct those conditions. If we can't do this I'm walking out."

He did, and was followed by Senator John W. Fribley (Dem.), Pana, who declared, "I sincerely believe that this is going to be a whitewash committee and I'm withdrawing, too."

The last Democrat was Senator Norman Barry, Chicago, who joined his colleagues because, he said, "all this committee can do is hash and rehash old testimony. Anything new was foreclosed by a vote of six to four."

After additional applause from the spectators had died out, Little stepped into the breach.

"I have been trying to hold the scope of this investigation to the purposes for which it was created," he asserted. "If we were to enter into all the political ramifications in the state of Illinois, we would never get through by the May 15 deadline.

"We cannot play around here like the bunch of politicians that we probably are. We have been playing a game with a serious problem."

Testimony by Scanlan.

In testifying yesterday before the committee, Inspector Scanlan said "all semblance of honesty or efficiency" left the State Department of Mines and Minerals when Joseph Marchesi quit as Assistant director and was replaced by, Robert Weir.

Every time mine inspectors were called together, Scanlan continued, "it was a political meeting. There was nothing said about mine safety. We were called in during political campaigns and told what to do. There were two exceptions —meetings called by the United States Bureau of Mines to teach us about mine rescue work."

Scanlan read a 10-page statement to the committee, in which he said, in part: "While all coal operators in the state have enjoyed immunity from law enforcement, the major companies enjoyed the most.

"The Centralia Coal Co. enjoyed more immunity than any other company in my district. Perhaps one reason for this is that when Robert M. Medill was up for reappointment, the Centralia Coal Co. came to his support and indorsed him.

"In granting this immunity to coal operators, Medill had a definite purpose in mind which you all know by now. It was exposed by the St. Louis Post-Dispatch on March 19, 1947."

MEDILL OWED JOB AS MINE BUREAU HEAD TO OPERATORS

Practice in Illinois for Owners to Nominate Director of Department and for Unions to Suggest Assistant.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 9

By SPENCER R. McCULLOCH
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

CHICAGO, April 9—Robert M. Medill, who resigned under fire as director of the Illinois Department of Mines and Minerals after the Centralia mine explosion which killed 111 miners, owed his job to the coal operators, the Post-Dispatch learned today.

The miners had scant voice in the selection of the director of the department in charge of mine safety, it was learned, under a tacit agreement that the operators would nominate the director of the department while the mine unions would recommend his assistant.

Medill was superintendent of mines for the Rock Mountain Fuel Co. of Denver, Colo., from the fall of 1934 until March 1935, when he was discharged. Miss Josephine Roche, president of the firm and at one time National Youth Administration chairman, said Medill was fired because he proved "unsatisfactory." She declined to elaborate, other than to say "he just didn't work out well."

Robert Weir, the current assistant director, was prior to his appointment a "face boss," a job corresponding to a foreman's post, at a Bell & Zoller mine at Zeigler, Ill.

As previously revealed in the Post-Dispatch, many of the unheeded safety recommendations by State Mine Inspector Driscoll Scanlan would be referred by Weir to executives of the Centralia Coal Co. and the Bell & Zoller interests, which in practical effect constituted an operating and selling team. No compliance was noted and his communications recommending compliance customarily went unanswered.

Weir, formerly active in the United Mine Workers, had the backing of that union, it was understood, as well as the approval of the rival Progressive Mine Workers. He is, of course, subordinate to the director of the Bureau of Mines and Minerals.

Fred S. Wilkey, secretary of the Illinois Coal Operators' Association, composed of the major mine companies in Illinois, including the Bell & Zoller interests, told the Post-Dispatch that the practice of operators passing on nominees for the directorship was one of 30 years' standing.

Medill, he recalled, was approved by Gov. Dwight H. Green in 1941 and subsequently reappointed by Gov. Green without necessity of further action by the association or its members. Customarily, a list of several acceptable appointees is submitted to the Governor by the operators, but no records were apparently available as to whether Medill was chosen from one of several approved by the operators, although it was agreed that he was acceptable to them.

George F. Campbell, president of the Illinois Coal Operators' Association, told the Post-Dispatch that he did not recall whether approval of Medill was transmitted to the Governor by letter or verbally, but that he considered that he met the qualifications of head of the Department of Mines and Minerals.

Asked what he deemed them to be, Campbell replied "a competent man who knows the industry, who has had practical operating experience, who understands the business and who isn't connected with any operator."

Campbell, who is vice president of the Old Ben Coal Corp., said he always had felt Medill was a good man to head the department, saying that Medill had experienced "some awful slaps in the last couple of months."

The general counsel of the Illinois Coal Operators' Association for 18 years has been Thurlow G. Essington of this city, who was a former unsuccessful Democratic candidate for the governorship against the late Len Small. One of his law partners is George B. McKibbin, who resigned last August as director of finance in Gov. Green's cabinet.

OPERATORS OF MINE, STATE AGENCY, SCANLAN BLAMED BY ILLINOIS FACT-FINDERS

'Public Officers Followed Weak and Indifferent Policy Toward Enforcement' of Safety Laws, Says Report—Union, U.S. Coal Administrator Cleared.

Reprinted from the Post-Dispatch of April 13

By ROY J. HARRIS
A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., April 12.

RESPONSIBILITY for the Centralia (Ill.) mine disaster March 25, in which 111 men lost their lives, was charged against the mine operators, the State Department of Mines and Minerals and Inspector Driscoll Scanlan, by Gov. Dwight H. Green's seven-man fact-finding commission, which filed its report yesterday following a 10-day investigation.

The commission, headed by John E. Cassidy, former Illinois attorney general found that neither the Federal Coal Mines Administration nor the Mine Safety Committee of the United Mine Workers of America was culpable, but added that, "if UMWA officers believe their union should have authority to enforce safe working conditions," they should employ skilled mine inspectors, legally authorized to make inspections.

Robert M. Medill, director of the Department of Mines and Minerals until he resigned under fire a week after the disaster, was not mentioned by name in the report, but the department he headed was criticised in scathing terms.

"Indifferent Policy."

"The evidence is convincing," said the report, "that the public officers of the Department of Mines and Minerals and the members of the State Mining Board followed a weak, ineffectual and indifferent policy toward enforcement of state mining laws for at least 18 months with respect to this mine. The enforcement was largely confined to writing a succession of letters to the company containing mild requests that the complaints from Inspector Scanlan be remedied and his recommendations obeyed."

Scanlan, although criticized for not closing the mine under his legal authority, even at the risk of his job, was praised nevertheless for his skill, knowledge and devotedness to his duties."

"Other evidence showed that he had the confidence of the miners who worked in this mine," the report said. "He testified that the mine should have been closed. We believe his expressed fear that, if he did so, he would be discharged or reprimanded by the State Director of Mines and Minerals is not a sufficient excuse for his failure to close the mine. The safety of the miners, according to his own testimony, was in such jeopardy that we believe he should have risked his job, even if his fear about his job as state inspector was justified."

Responsibility of Owners.

Discussing the responsibility of the Central Coal Co., mine owners, the report declared:

"The primary responsibility for the safety of the miners and protection of the company's property rested upon the company officials, superintendent and manager. The source of ignition may have been accidental, or due to the carelessness of a workman, but the evidence is convincing that coal dust was the chief devastating factor in the explosion because of its high combustible content.

"There was insufficient and too infrequent application or installation of rock dust to keep the mine safe from explosion propagation, and coal dust was the direct cause of a large number of fatalities. It is apparent that the company officers and management did not exercise the proper degree of diligence toward complying with the recommendations of federal and state inspectors for many months prior to the explosion."

Recommendations.

Four principal recommendations were submitted by the commission in the 46-page report. They were as follows:

1. Placing the state inspectors under civil service, with adequate compensation and revocability of appointment only after a state court hearing. "We believe the state inspectors should have legal authority and security commensurate with their very important duties."

2. More frequent examinations by state inspectors. "The Krug-Lewis agreement and the Federal Safety Code do not change or supersede the mining laws of Illinois. The agreement provides that, if the state mining laws and the federal code are in any respect inconsistent, the state law shall prevail."

3. Filing of inspector's report with county circuit clerks so that they will be "readily available at all times in the vicinity of the mine for convenient examination by any interested parties and the state's attorney when he deems it advisable."

4. General amendment of state mining laws to prevent explosions in the future, based on the "scientific findings and recommendations of the United States Bureau of Mines."

On Issue of Liability.

With respect to liability, the report pointed out there are two kinds—civil and criminal. Since exclusive civil liability is provided by the State Workmen's Compensation Act, it was recommended that the State Industrial Commission "proceed with all convenient speed to file awards so that the bereaved families and the injured may receive their benefits without delay."

As to criminal liability, the report said:

"The grand jury of Washington county is the only agency under the law to pass upon and determine whether there is probable cause for criminal prosecution. If that agency decides to investigate this subject, and if they express a desire for the evidence gathered by this committee, we suggest it be delivered for the consideration.

"The state's attorney of Washington county has very limited facilities, and, if he makes the request, we recommend that all appropriate departments of the state government extend full cooperation."

Like Medill, Gov. Green went without mention in the report. Medill, reappointed by Green in 1941 over the protest of the UMWA, on the ground he was an "operators' man," was charged by Scanlan during commission hearings with having ordered mine inspectors to solicit from mine operators contributions for the recent Chicago Republican mayoralty campaign.

Review of Evidence.

In the 40 pages devoted to a review of evidence adduced at the hearings, however, the report told of the letter sent by four Centralia miners to Gov. Green March 3, 1946, complaining of safety conditions and asking the Governor to "please save our lives." It quoted also from the forwarding letter sent with the miners' letter by John William Chapman, the Governor's secretary, to Medill, in which Chapman said: "It is my opinion that the Governor may be subjected to very severe criticism in the event the facts complained of are true and that as a result of this condition some serious accident occurs in the mine."

"Medill's reply also was quoted, in which he suggested "that the Governor advise Local 52, UMWA, that he is calling the matter to the attention of the State Mining Board with instructions it be given full and complete consideration at their next meeting."

"We have no evidence that the State Mining Board again considered this mine in any respect prior to the explosion," the commission report commented tersely. Three of the four miners who wrote the Governor were killed in the mine disaster.

In its review of the evidence, the report quoted from each of Inspector Scanlan's reports to Medill beginning in 1945, sent every two or three months and repeatedly pointing out failure of the company to comply with safety regulations. The report referred also to the routine forwarding to the company of Scanlan's reports by Assistant Director Robert Weir, with requests for compliance.

On Cause of Blast.

No conclusion was reached by the commission as to the cause of the blast, except that there was an ignition of unknown source and a "propagation sweep or projection of combustion on account of a quantity of coal dust in the mine." This propagation "produced carbon monoxide gas in deadly quantities and suffocated from 40 to 50 of the victims," the report said.

The report quoted pertinent sections of Illinois mine safety laws, including those which place inspectors under control of the State Mining Board, charging with enforcement through inspectors, and which authorize inspectors to close mines guilty of continued violations.

After reviewing federal inspection reports, which recited "multiple violations of safety regulations," the report said: "It appears from the evidence that noncompliance with ventilation standards, failure to remove, allay and counteract coal dust throughout the mine, and the use of explosives in a non-permissible manner were the violations which were factors in the explosion and its disastrous results.

"The evidence indicates that inadequate ventilation was a contributing factor, for the reason, if there had been sufficient ventilation, the probable gasses existing before and at the time of ignition would have been diffused and minimized.

"The evidence is convincing that, if the mine had been adequately rock-dusted, the explosion and its effect would have been confined to the immediate area at the source, that it would not have spread and a large number of the miners would have been saved.

"Benefit from removal of the dust is obvious. The testimony of witnesses experienced in the mining industry, without exception, proves that use of a sprinkling system is a recognized method to insure safety. There were no facilities for face sprinkling in this mine. The state and federal inspectors repeatedly recommended such an installation over a long period before the explosion.

"However, Mine Manager (William H.) Brown testified that the management did not honestly think it was economical to put in sprinkling and did not wish to bear the expense of the installation. He said the only reason they did not install it was because it was expensive."

Other members of the fact-finding commission, besides Cassidy, who lives in Peoria, were Oliver Bishop, Zeigler, representing the UMWA; David H. Devonald, Chicago, vice president in charge of operations, Peabody Coal Co.; James Sneddon, Royalton, inspector-at-large for the State Mines and Minerals Department; State's Attorney Wilbert J. Hohlt of Washington county, where the mine is situated; John E. Jones, Benton, representing the Federal Coal Mines Administration, and W. A. Gallagher, Vincennes, Ind., of the United States Bureau of Mines.